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ABSTRACT

A compact is a commitment to sharing responsibility for student learning and an action plan for a family-school-community partnership to help children get a high-quality education. All across America parents, teachers, and community and business leaders are creating such compacts to build and strengthen partnerships for improved student learning. This handbook is designed to take a family-school compact team through the steps of building a compact. It provides information, strategies examples, and checklists to help parents, educators, and community members develop effective, workable compacts that can improve the school and increase student achievement. Following an introduction which describes the nature of the compact and outlines Title I legislation for high standards and student achievement, the handbook details the steps of the compact: (1) getting started--bringing the stakeholders together as a team; (2) creating the compact, including deciding the school's learning goals; (3) using the compact, including building support; (4) evaluating the results, including an example of a school profile and lessons for using evaluation data; and (5) strengthening the compact, including taking credit for what's been done right, and rethinking what needs to be done better. The handbook's concluding section discusses turning obstacles into opportunities. Worksheets for each of the five steps are included, and an appendix lists key resources. Forms from the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education are also included. Seventeen separately printed "Activity Sheets" are appended. (HTH)

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# A Compact for Learning

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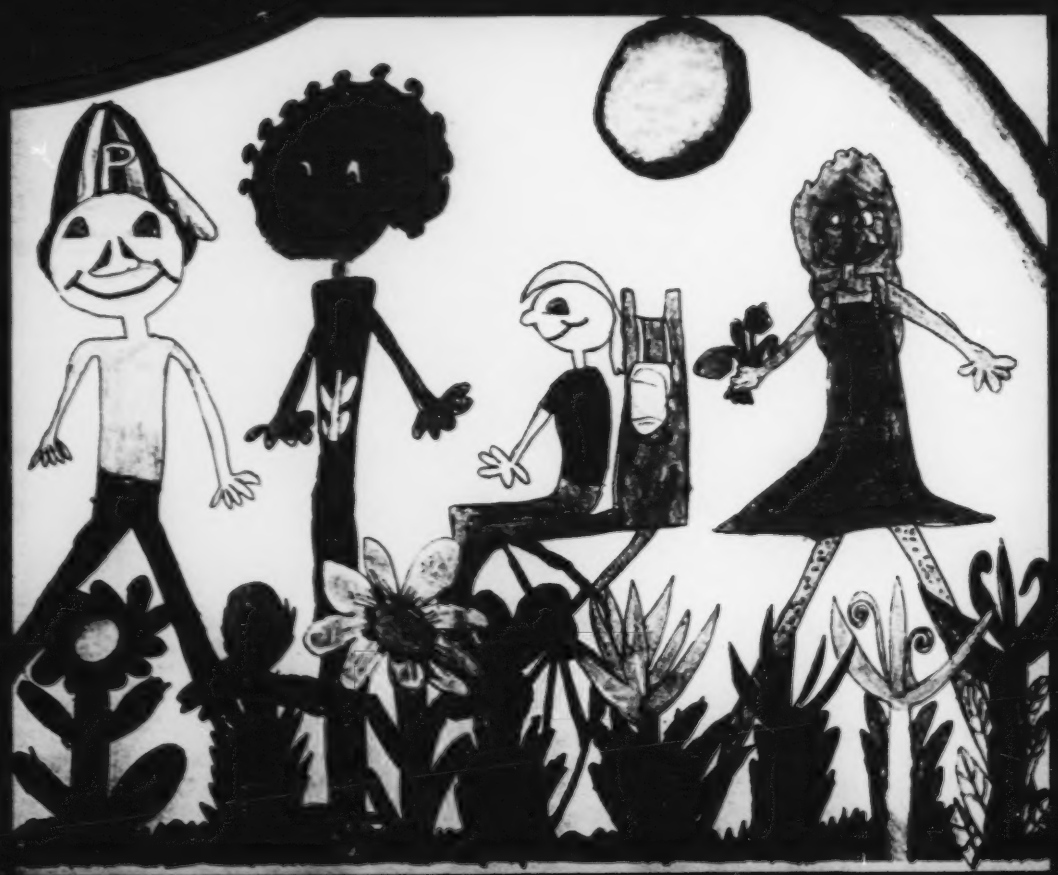

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# Compact Legislation

**Public Law 103-382, The Improving America's Schools Act, Section (d), "Shared Responsibilities for High Student Performance":**

"... each school served under this part shall jointly develop with parents for all children served under this part a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards.

**Such Compact shall ...**

1. describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under this part to meet the State's student performance standards; the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, and television watching; volunteering in their child's classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time; and

2. address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum:

   a. parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child's achievement;

   b. frequent reports to parents on their children's progress; and

   c. reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities."

# A Compact for Learning

## An Action Handbook for

## Family-School-Community Partnerships

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**"What we want to do is to challenge every principal, every teacher, every parent to have a written compact to outline their expectations and their responsibilities for helping every child learn to high standards."**

**President Clinton**
Speech at the Vice President's
Family Reunion Conference
*Families and Learning*
June 25, 1997

# Foreword



**All across America there are communities pulling together to strengthen education. Parents, teachers, and community and business leaders, in every part of our country, are creating compacts to build and strengthen partnerships for improved student learning.**

A compact is (1) a commitment to sharing responsibility for student learning and (2) an action plan for a family-school-community partnership to help children in your school get a high-quality education. This user-friendly handbook is designed to walk your family-school compact team through the steps of building a compact. It provides information, strategies, examples, and checklists to help parents, educators, and community members develop effective, workable compacts that can improve your school and increase student achievement. The handbook includes activity sheets to assist your partners in the creation and use of a compact.

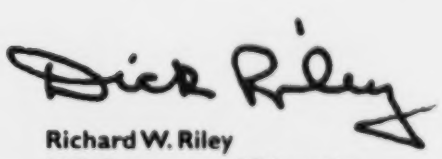
*A Compact for Learning* is part of a continuous improvement series that will highlight key issues of interest to teachers, parents, and principals who want to make their schools better and work towards standards of excellence. These materials are available on the U.S. Department of Education Web site with links to resources, examples, and other school improvement aids.

This handbook and the Web site are both works in progress. We welcome your comments and hope that you will share your experiences with family-school compacts. Please mail your ideas or a copy of your compact to:

The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education
600 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-8173

Many of these compacts and tips will be put on the Partnership Web site, which is available through the U.S. Department of Education's home page at **www.ed.gov/PFIE**.

We look forward to hearing from you.



**Richard W. Riley**
**U.S. Secretary of Education**

# Introduction

**"Better education is everybody's business."**

*—The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education*

Today, we benefit from 30 years of research showing that families are important educators of their children. Until recently, however, many parents were told, "Hands off, you don't know how to do it." Not any more.

Truly, this is a new time in education, a time calling for the widest participation from school staff, family members, and students. All are asking, "What do we need to know? What are our responsibilities? What are the benefits of our actions? How can we work together?"

Family involvement in education makes a difference: in fact, it can make **the** difference in a student's achievement at school and in life. Many schools now sponsor family involvement initiatives and activities to improve student learning and to support effective school performance through family-school-community partnerships.

Title I of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 supports local efforts to help children meet challenging standards and to get families involved.[1] Every school receiving Title I funds must develop a compact. The compact is a document that clarifies what families and schools can do to help children reach high standards. It serves as a clear reminder of everybody's responsibility to take action at school and at home so that children can learn what is required of them. With the potential to create consensus and action, the compact defines the mutual responsibilities we all have for improving education now.

## What is a compact?

A compact is a written commitment indicating how all members of a school community—parents, teachers, principals, students, and concerned community members—agree to share responsibility for student learning.

Writing a family-school compact provides an opportunity to create new partnerships in your school community. Principals and teachers, parents and other family members, students, and community members all have a role to play in helping students learn and achieve to standards of excellence. As you build your team, reach out, think big, and be creative. Use the development of a compact as a way to get parents and others who have not been closely connected to the school involved in the process. **Bringing together a team to talk about your school's needs and the shared responsibilities of your school community can be as important as the task of developing a compact.**

[1] Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, amended by the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, is designed to enable schools to provide opportunities for low-income and low-achieving children to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to meet the challenging standards developed for all children.

# Signal Hill Elementary School Compact

**Long Beach, California**

## The School

The staff and parents/guardians at Signal Hill Elementary School have high expectations of themselves and of the students at the school. In an effort to provide the highest quality instructional program to the students at Signal Hill Elementary School and to show how the school and family are working together to educate the children at Signal Hill Elementary, the staff and parents/guardians of Signal Hill Elementary School agree to implement the following programs and activities:

- Signal Hill Elementary School will provide an academic program that is rigorous and challenging and provide an accelerated math and science program.
- Signal Hill Elementary School staff will provide intersession and after-school enrichment programs for all students.
- Signal Hill Elementary School staff will communicate with families on an ongoing basis regarding the students' academic progress.
- Signal Hill Elementary School will implement a K-5 homework program that emphasizes meaningful practice of instructional content and writing in all content areas.
- Signal Hill Elementary School will involve parents/guardians in the governance of the school.

## The Home

The school and families of Signal Hill Elementary recognize that while both parties agree that the expectations listed here are necessary in order to strengthen the communication and commitment between the home and the school, rare occasions may arise where one or both parties will have difficulty fulfilling all or part of this compact. It is also recognized that the school's purpose is to support the community and its families in whatever manner is necessary and reasonable within its ability to do so, and likewise, it is the family's responsibility to support the child and the school community.

- Parents/guardians at Signal Hill Elementary School will volunteer at least 10 hours a year at the school.
- Parents/guardians at Signal Hill Elementary School will send their children to school appropriately dressed, prepared to learn, and on time.
- Parents/guardians at Signal Hill Elementary School will read to their children at least 15 minutes a night.
- Parents/guardians at Signal Hill Elementary School will attend at least one parent/teacher conference a year to discuss the academic progress of their children.
- Parents/guardians at Signal Hill Elementary School will assist their children with their homework assignments on a regular basis to ensure completeness and accuracy.

| Parent/guardian | Principal | Teacher |
|---|---|---|

The family-school compact from Signal Hill Elementary School in Long Beach, California, focuses on improving students' academic achievement by setting high expectations for all students and for all of the school's partners. The compact is only one piece of a larger family-school partnership focused on shared responsibility. Notice how the commitments within the compact integrate the shared responsibilities of the compact into a cohesive plan of action. More examples of compacts may be found in Appendix A.

## Purpose of the handbook

This action handbook explores the steps for compact implementation as illustrated in the diagram. The handbook is intended for the use of the compact team, whether it is a new group or an existing group, such as the site-based management council, a family-school advisory group, the local PTA, or any other group that works closely with the school.

Developing a partnership compact is good experience for any school. This handbook is intended to serve a variety of schools at all levels—elementary or secondary, Title I or not. If you already have a compact, the handbook can help you use, evaluate, and strengthen it. Just jump in at the appropriate step. At the end of each section is an activity sheet. Putting ideas on paper will help to focus your thinking and planning. In the folder, you will find a set of black and white master copies of the activity sheets to use with the compact team.

As you develop and use your compact, remember that your best resources are the people around you—the teachers, school staff, parents, students, and community members who share your concern about the school and about student learning. Each person has something valuable to offer to the compact: it's up to you to discover the potential in your school community. Good luck, and remember that successful partnerships make successful schools!

**"It is not enough to have high expectations or set challenging standards. We must put standards of excellence into action in the classroom."**

**Richard W. Riley**
U.S. Secretary of Education

# Get Started

The world is changing rapidly. More and more jobs require education beyond high school. More and more jobs require an ability to use technology. To be successful in the workplace and in life, students must develop the ability to learn new skills and to adapt to new situations. Academic standards reflect these new demands. Standards are written statements that say what a child is supposed to do and learn at each grade level and how the child should demonstrate that learning. All across the country, schools, school districts, and states are setting high academic standards and high expectations for all students so that they can be successful in school and in life.

## High academic standards and high expectations

It is important to understand how academic standards and the compact work together to improve student learning and increase student achievement. The new Title I legislation introduces substantial changes to strengthen learning in a schoolwide program. A central focus of the new law is its emphasis on teaching and learning to high standards set by states and local schools. The standards are a guideline for teaching and learning. Remediation through completing worksheets and through drill and practice is not enough: students must be able to apply what they learn to the world around them.

Results from recent international comparisons of students' achievement in math and science and student success on college entrance tests (SATs and ACTs) show that taking rigorous courses is a strong predictor of high achievement. Setting high standards is the first step to both rigorous course work and high achievement. Consider your standards as you develop a compact. Standards help parents answer questions such as: "What is it that my child should know?" and "Is my child learning?"

**Challenging standards:**

- Give teachers and parents the common language that they need to be an effective team;
- Make sure everyone knows exactly what children are expected to learn; and
- Help the team of teachers, students, and families work toward the same goals.

When the goals are clear, teachers can apply the most effective teaching strategies, and parents can continue the learning at home in simple and enjoyable ways. Standards provide a measure of performance that assesses student work against what *all* students should know and be able to do instead of comparing students to one another. For some students, it may take more time, extra help, and greater effort, yet every student can successfully learn and achieve to higher academic standards.

## Content standards

Content standards establish learning priorities by grade level. Standards ensure that the basic concepts and skills being taught in one class will be the same ones being taught in another class across town. They need not be taught by the same methods or by using the same topics. For example, Miss Garcia may ask her fourth-grade class to observe and describe the physical characteristics of the local neighborhood using charts organized by physical features (trees, hills, roads, and the like). Mr. Parsons might ask his class to break up into small groups and construct physical models of the neighborhood. Both teachers are teaching the essential elements of geography.

When the children are tested, both classes need to be able to meet the standard, found in their geography test, of being able to describe the physical characteristics of locales (terrain, climate, weather, and so forth) even though the classes learned this information in different ways.

The following example is a selection of the content standards for third-grade language arts used at Signal Hill Elelmentary School in Long Beach, California.

**A fluent third-grade reader:**

- Increases vocabulary by understanding concepts such as synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms.
- Recognizes root words, prefixes, and suffixes.
- Demonstrates literal comprehension by recalling details and sequencing events.
- Identifies the main idea, recognizes cause/effect relationships, makes inferences and predictions from reading selections, and draws conclusions from the overall meaning of a selection.

## Performance standards

Performance standards allow us to evaluate student work against what students should be learning as identified by parents, citizens, and educators in their states and communities. Consistent standards allow Miss Garcia's and Mr. Parsons' fourth-grade students to be judged against the same set of rules—the same set of standards of what students are expected to know. If children in both classes correctly answer 18 out of 20 questions on their test, both teachers agree that their students have mastered the material.

Once families, teachers, and students understand what students are expected to learn, it is important to assess how well students are meeting the content standards. Kentucky has developed the following performance levels to help teachers and families monitor, assist, and encourage student progress towards higher academic standards.

**Distinguished**

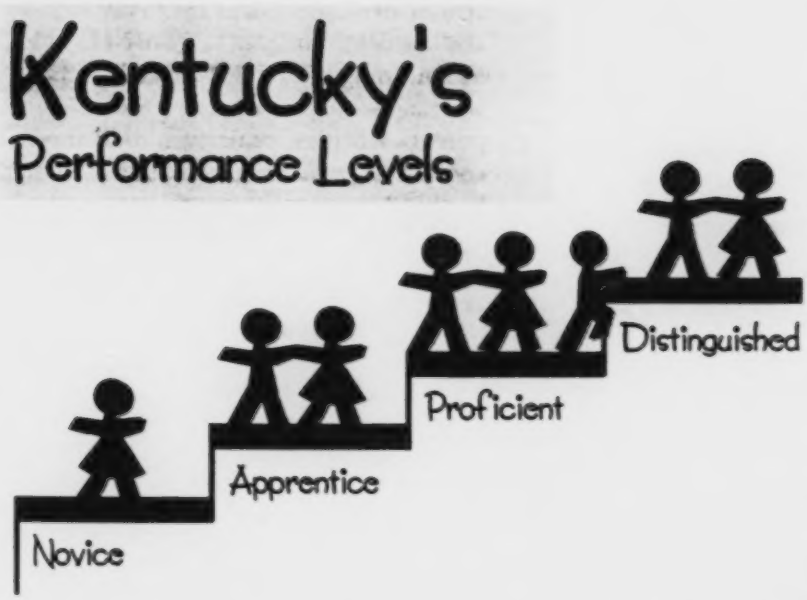
- The student completes all important components of the task and communicates ideas clearly.
- The student demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the relevant concepts and/or process.
- Where appropriate, the student offers insightful interpretations or extensions (generalizations, applications, and analogies).

**Proficient**

- The student completes most important components of the task and communicates clearly.
- The student demonstrates understanding of major concepts even though he/she overlooks or misunderstands some less important ideas or details.

**Apprentice**

- The student completes some important components of the task and communicates those clearly.




- The student demonstrates that there are gaps in his/her conceptual understanding.

**Novice**

- The student shows minimal understanding.
- The student is unable to generate strategy. Answers may display only recall effect, lack clear communication and /or be totally incorrect or irrelevant.

## National checkpoints of progress

Many state academic standards are based on current research, which connects these standards to national measures of success. A new American consensus on education has developed about what is needed to prepare our young people for the coming times. Widely accepted and used among national policymakers and practitioners, the following checkpoints of student progress stem from research that identifies certain points of student growth to be particularly critical transition periods.

- **Every child in America is reading well and independently by the end of third grade.** If children are not able to read independently by the end of the third grade, their ability to succeed in school is in jeopardy. Research shows that it is hard to catch up, and that falling behind in early reading is a strong predictor of dropping out of school. In America, 40 percent of fourth-graders do not meet basic levels for reading achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

- **Every child in America is competent in math, including algebra at the eighth grade.** American eighth-graders scored above the international average in science and below the international average in math on the Third International Assessment of Math and Science. Because of this test, we now know what it takes to be competitive both nationally and internationally in math and science by the eighth grade. Competency in algebra and in science at the eighth grade is pivotal because of the "gate keeper" action of the courses: if students learn the math and science material early, they will be ready to take the sequence of courses in high school that prepares them for college and for careers.

- **Every 18-year-old in America is prepared academically and financially for college.** Over half of the new jobs created in the past three years are managerial and professional jobs requiring higher-level skills. Students must be prepared academically to take advantage of these career options. They need to take rigorous academic classes, and they need access to Advanced Placement and Tech-Prep courses. Advanced Placement courses and tests reflect national standards of excellence across America that help high school students prepare to enter and succeed in college.

## Taking stock of standards at your school

The Education Excellence Partnership[2] is a group of major organizations that have teamed up to promote high academic standards and high expectations for all students. Together, they have developed the following set of questions related to academic standards at the local school level. These questions reflect the kind of information the school, its students and their families, and the community at large need to help all children achieve. If your compact is working well, each of your partners—parents, teachers, principals, concerned community members, and others—should be able to answer these questions or to know how to access the information easily. Think about how the compact will help you provide answers to these and other questions you have about your school.

### 1. What skills and knowledge will the students be expected to master this year?

- What are students expected to learn this year in key subjects like math, science, history, and English?
- Are there challenging academic standards in place at this school, and how do they compare with those in other school districts?
- How do teachers inform students about the academic standards they're expected to meet?
- What kinds of projects and assignments are in place to help students meet higher academic standards?

### 2. How will students be evaluated?

- What kind of information do teachers use to evaluate students' learning and the extent to which students are academically ready to move on to the next grade?
- How are grades determined in the classroom?
- Will students be able to take new national tests in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math when they become available in 1999?

### 3. What can families do to stay more involved in their children's academic progress?

- What can families do at home to complement what is happening in the classroom?
- How can families know on a daily basis what homework has been assigned?
- How can families support teachers' efforts in implementing higher academic standards?

### 4. How does the school accommodate differences in learning?

- What if a student is a slow learner and falls behind, or is a fast learner and is bored?
- Are summer school, tutoring, or other programs available for students who need more help?

### 5. How are students prepared for further learning after high school?

- What learning opportunities exist outside the classroom to make learning more relevant to what happens in the real world?
- Are children encouraged to think about a wide variety of career interests?
- Are all students encouraged to take algebra by the end of eighth grade?

[2]The Education Excellence Partnership comprises the Business Roundtable, U.S. Department of Education, American Federation of Teachers, National Alliance of Business, National Education Association, National Governors' Association, and U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The questions are adapted from *Strengthening your child's future*, a booklet for parents about academic standards (1997). For a copy, call 1-800-382-3762.

# 1 Get Started

## Activity Sheet A: Taking Stock of Standards

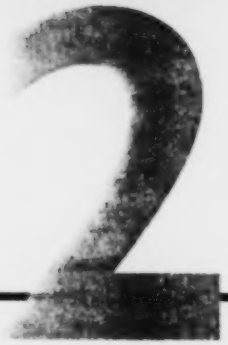
Directions: Use the sets of questions developed by the Education Excellence Partnership as an opening discussion to help the compact team make a quick assessment of your school. Refer back to the previous page for more questions to consider within each category listed below.



| **Categories of questions from the Education Excellence Partnership's brochure, *Strengthening your child's academic future.*** | **Do families have the information necessary to answer the question?** | **Do teachers and school staff have the information necessary to answer the question?** | **What commitments need to be included in the compact to ensure that families, teachers, and school staff can answer the question?** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. What skills and knowledge will the students be expected to master this year? | | | |
| 2. How will students be evaluated? | | | |
| 3. What can families do to stay more involved in their children's academic progress? | | | |
| 4. How does the school accommodate differences in learning? | | | |
| 5. How are students prepared for further learning after high school? | | | |

**In a 1995 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll, 89 percent of parents indicated their willingness to sign a "contract" or a compact stating the mutual responsibilities of the school, the parents, and the student.**

# Write the Compact



## The shared responsibilities of the compact

Parents, teachers, schools, and communities all want to know more about how they can help students succeed in school and in life. The compact can help achieve this aim to learn more in order to do more. Research confirms what many parents and educational experts identify as critical for school improvement and student success:

- Shared responsibility for student learning and high achievement;
- Shared responsibility for effective, frequent communication between school and home; and
- Shared responsibility for building capacity for the family-school-community partnership through volunteering and training.

### Shared responsibility for student learning and high achievement

An effective partnership recognizes that a team can accomplish together what each partner could not accomplish alone. That's why it is important for a family-school partnership to connect learning at school and learning at home. In addition, it is just as important that schools and families recognize and actively work to eliminate the obstacles that prevent or disrupt learning, such as drugs, violence, and inadequate educational technology. An effective partnership for learning works to:

- Set high standards and high expectations;
- Provide and support sound instruction;
- Make schools safe and drug free; and
- Apply modern technology.

**The Signal Hill Elementary School compact in the introduction illustrates the shared responsibility to help all children learn to high standards:**

Signal Hill School agrees to offer a rigorous and challenging academic program and, more specifically, an accelerated math and science program. The school also agrees to provide extended learning opportunities and to assign meaningful homework, with an emphasis on writing in all content areas.

Signal Hill parents agree to monitor homework completion and to send students to school prepared to learn and on time. Parents also agree to support learning at home by reading with their children every night.

## Shared responsibility for effective, frequent communication between school and home

Effective schools recognize that positive attitudes lead to positive communication. First, there has to be mutual agreement that parents and teachers need to communicate. Parents often feel that educators talk down to them or speak in educational jargon they do not understand. And teachers often feel that parents need to talk more about education with their children. Maintaining effective, frequent communication among families, schools, and students in a language everyone can understand is essential to building partnerships.

**The Signal Hill Elementary School compact illustrates the shared responsibility to communicate effectively and frequently between home and school:**

Signal Hill School agrees to communicate frequently with families about student progress.

Signal Hill parents agree to attend at least one parent-teacher conference a year.

**The Signal Hill Elementary School compact illustrates the shared responsibility to build capacity through volunteering and training:**

Signal Hill School agrees to involve parents in school governance.

Signal Hill parents agree to volunteer at least ten hours a year at the school.

## Shared responsibility for building capacity through volunteering and training

Building capacity means helping school staff, teachers, and families develop the skills, motivation, and opportunities to work together to improve student learning. Few teachers ever receive formal training in working with families. Similarly, research shows that many parents want to help their children learn but are not sure what to do. Training and time spent engaged—these are the ingredients that build and strengthen partnerships on behalf of children's learning.

Communities too are rich in untapped resources that can benefit children. When families and community members volunteer their time and talent in the schools, both schools and students increase their capacity to do more and to do it better.

## Using the framework of shared responsibility

In a recent survey, 79 percent of parents reported that they want to learn more about how to be involved in their children's learning. Seventy-seven percent of parents said they believed teachers could learn more about involving them in their children's learning.

The compact is an opportunity for all partners to accept the responsibility for helping children learn. Based on the compact framework, the matrix that follows offers some examples of what you can include in your compact. Notice how the commitments of each partner complement and build on one another. The compact will help all partners work together in a coordinated effort to improve student learning.

Think about how you will get students involved in the compact. The sample items in the framework may give you some ideas. Making students full partners in the compact sends a strong message to them about the importance of education and their responsibility to be active participants in learning. See Appendix B for more information about how the community can join the compact.

Following the matrix is *Activity Sheet B: Make Your Commitment*. Use this activity sheet to record the shared responsibilities of the compact partners. While your compact team may use some of the sample commitments in the matrix, your school's compact will contain shared responsibilities that reflect the unique requirements and goals of the school.

## The National PTA Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs

The National PTA has developed a set of standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs, which may be useful to your compact team as you think about the framework of shared responsibilities. Families and schools each have a part to play in meeting these standards.

**Standard I: Communicating**—Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.

**Standard II: Parenting**—Parenting skills are promoted and supported.

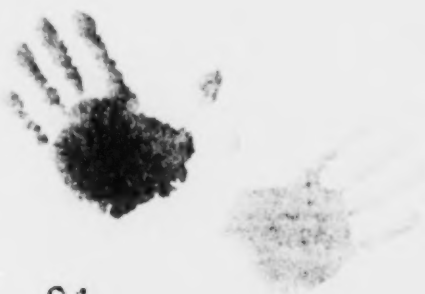
**Standard III: Student learning**—Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

**Standard IV: Volunteering**—Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.

**Standard V: School decision making and advocacy**—Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.

**Standard VI: Collaborating with community**—Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.





## Shared responsibility for student learning and high achievement

| As a school, we will | As a family, we will | As a student, I will |
|---|---|---|
| **Set high standards and high expectations** | | |
| ❑ Expect students not only to learn the basics but also to take more rigorous courses in order to reach their individual potential while preparing for college or for careers.<br>❑ _____ | ❑ Work with the school and our child to plan a rigorous academic program.<br>❑ Discuss with our child the importance of working hard to get the most out of school.<br>❑ _____ | ❑ Discover my own unique abilities by taking challenging courses.<br>❑ Recognize and do the hard work it takes to be successful in school.<br>❑ _____ |
| **Provide and support sound instruction** | | |
| ❑ Assign meaningful homework with clear directions and return it promptly with comments.<br>❑ Offer special assistance and appropriate time to students who progress at different rates.<br>❑ _____ | ❑ Monitor our child's progress and supervise completion of homework.<br>❑ Read at home together or encourage our child to read at least 30 minutes a day.<br>❑ _____ | ❑ Attend school regularly, ready to learn with homework completed.<br>❑ Use my free time wisely by reading for pleasure and by joining in cultural, recreational, and learning activities.<br>❑ _____ |
| **Make schools safe and drug free** | | |
| ❑ Set firm and fair safety, discipline, and drug enforcement policies.<br>❑ _____ | ❑ Talk with our child about the dangers of alcohol, drugs, and weapons.<br>❑ _____ | ❑ Serve as a role model to my peers by honoring the school discipline codes.<br>❑ _____ |
| **Apply modern technology** | | |
| ❑ Make the use of computers and Internet a routine part of instruction, reinforcing lessons and skills while enabling students to become technologically literate.<br>❑ _____ | ❑ Find ways to give our children access to technology in school and after school to gain the necessary skills to succeed in school and in the workplace.<br>❑ _____ | ❑ Learn to use computers and the Internet to help me do well in school.<br>❑ Share my knowledge of computers and the Internet with my peers and my family.<br>❑ _____ |

## Shared responsibility for communication

| As a school, we will | As a family, we will | As a student, I will |
|---|---|---|
| ❑ Communicate with families frequently at convenient times and locations.<br><br>❑ Inform students, families, and the community about the high academic standards at our school and how they can help students learn to these standards.<br><br>❑ Make the school a friendly place for parents to meet and talk.<br><br>❑ Give families timely reports on student progress and on the school's overall performance.<br><br>❑ Widely disseminate information on financial aid opportunities to help students pay for college.<br><br>❑ _____<br>_____ | ❑ Attend back-to-school events and parent-teacher conferences.<br><br>❑ Ask questions about standards and other areas of concern at the school, so that we can help support the school's mission.<br><br>❑ Be champions of the school, expressing our public support and working for school modernization, the use of technology, and the ongoing professional development of teachers.<br><br>❑ Secure the school's help in preparing our child for college academically and financially.<br><br>❑ _____<br>_____ | ❑ Talk to my family about what I am learning and doing in school, my interests, and my plans for the future.<br><br>❑ Seek assistance from my teacher when I have problems with my schoolwork.<br><br>❑ _____<br>_____ |

## Shared responsibility for building capacity through volunteering and training

| As a school, we will | As a family, we will | As a student, I will |
|---|---|---|
| ❑ Support Title I requirements to get families involved in school decisions.<br><br>❑ Create opportunities for all families to volunteer in the classroom, after school, and in other capacities, and encourage them to do so.<br><br>❑ Provide guidance to parents on helping their children with homework and on learning at home.<br><br>❑ Give staff and teachers the training to work effectively in partnership with families.<br><br>❑ _____<br>_____ | ❑ Volunteer for at least one event each semester, whether it be student monitoring, tutoring, or support for special activities, such as arts programs, science fairs, sporting events, or field trips.<br><br>❑ Help make the school a safe haven with computer and homework centers that operate after school.<br><br>❑ Participate in school decisions by attending meetings and by serving on advisory councils.<br><br>❑ _____<br>_____ | ❑ Volunteer to share my talents by tutoring or mentoring other students (for example, serving as a reading partner for a younger student).<br><br>❑ Get involved in service projects that benefit my school and my community.<br><br>❑ _____<br>_____ |

# 2 Write the Compact

## Activity Sheet B: Make Your Commitment

Directions: The school, families, students, and the community all have different shared responsibilities in the compact. Make copies of this worksheet, so the compact team can record the commitments of each group separately. Based on these worksheets, you can compile the responsibilities into one document.

**The ❑ school ❑ family ❑ student ❑ community agrees to the following shared responsibilities in the compact:**

**Shared responsibilities for student learning and high achievement**

❑ _____

❑ _____

❑ _____

**Shared responsibility for communication**

❑ _____

❑ _____

❑ _____

**Shared responsibility for building capacity through volunteering and training**

❑ _____

❑ _____

❑ _____

# Use Your School's Compact

Using your compact is the critical step that moves the compact from planning to action, from paper to partnership. First, people need to know about the compact—what it is and how they can get involved. Launching the compact is a great opportunity to create new partnerships and to reach out to families and community members who have not been involved at the school before.

One of the biggest challenges will be keeping people's attention on the compact once you launch it. Your compact partners will need constant reminders of how their daily activities—whether helping a student with homework or attending a meeting at school— fulfill the commitments in the compact.

## Get the word out

Today, everyone is overwhelmed with information, and many people have trouble listening to any message closely. ***Experts say that it often takes eight reminders or notices for someone to say finally, "I've heard of that."*** When spreading the word about the compact and encouraging people to support it, be patient: you can count on having to remind people many times. Identify and seek out those in the school community who need to endorse the compact to make it work: teachers, school staff, parents, students, professionals and business people, the superintendent, the school board, the mayor, and others. Keep track of how many times you disseminate information about the compact and how you do it, so that you can pinpoint the most successful means of communicating the message of shared responsibility. Remind your partners that the compact is more than a piece of paper, that it is an action plan for student success and school improvement.

### Here are some ways to publicize the compact:

- Include the compact in the school newsletter.
- Send home copies with students.
- Attach it to the weekly lunch menu.
- Create a Web site where people can share what they are doing to support a partnership for learning.
- Send e-mail messages to parents, employers, and other community organizations about how they can get involved.
- Start a listserv for compact partners.
- Add information about the compact partnership to the school's voice-mail system.
- Send out a mailing to the community.
- Print the compact in the local newspaper.
- Get the community involved through neighborhood get-togethers.
- Do a speaking tour of local groups and community organizations.
- Host a special event on the compact in conjunction with parent-teacher conferences.
- Make the compact the focus of your back-to-school night.

Your compact can be as far-reaching as you would like. Whatever you choose to do, link the compact to action so that families, school staff, and the community see how the compact can work to make things happen in your school.

## Provide the necessary support

Your compact is an evolving plan. It is important to decide each year how to support it. One way to ensure that the compact is used is to make it part of your school's annual plan—supported by financial resources. Allocating resources makes a strong statement about a school's priorities and its commitment to family involvement.

### What do you need to make the compact work?

- **Funding:** Title I funds[1], parent organization fundraiser profits, district funds, financial support through community and business partnerships.
- **Training** for teachers and school staff, including release time.
- **Resources for parents:** workshops, mailings, a newsletter, a parent library, a parent coordinator.
- **Communications technology:** a homework help line, an interactive voice mail system, an informational phone tree, a Web site.

## Put your compact into action

The most important and most effective way to get the word out about the compact is to use it in all parts of your school program. Make the compact an integral point of reference for all that you do at your school. In this way, all partners will understand how their commitments and their actions contribute to improved student learning and high achievement for all students. Here are some ways you can make your compact count.

### Use the compact to:

- Discuss student progress during parent-teacher conferences.
- Explain the school's high academic standards and high expectations for all students.
- Help launch programs for family involvement.
- Support training for teachers and other staff to work effectively with families.
- Complement school improvement plans.
- Help partners discuss their responsibilities in meeting the goals of the school.

*Activity Sheet C: Check Your Pulse* will help you think about how to use the compact. While the questions will be useful as your compact gets off the ground, you can return to them periodically to check on how well the compact is working. Use the questions in a focus group discussion. It's a great opportunity to get a variety of people involved. Each partner brings a different perspective and new ideas for using the compact.

[1]All school districts are now required to reserve "not less" than 1 percent of the Title I funds received (unless this amount is $5,000 or less) to support these activities, including family literacy and parenting classes. In addition, school districts, at their own discretion or at the request of constituents, may provide more than the minimum funds for these activities.

# Use Your School's Compact

## Activity Sheet C: Check Your Pulse

Directions: Ask a variety of compact partners to answer these questions to see how well the compact is working.

✔ Are your staff, family, and students aware that the compact exists?

✔ Do they know their commitments under the compact and are they fulfilling them?

✔ Is the compact used frequently in parent-teacher meetings and in other ways?

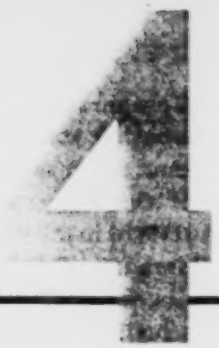
✔ How do parents, teachers, community members, and students most often use the compact?

✔ Are resources, including those from Title I, designated to help achieve the aims of your compact? How much? Are there any other possible resources available?

✔ Does your school community feel that the compact is a reasonably balanced statement of mutual responsibilities for student learning and school performance?

✔ Are there any new initiatives in the school, community, or district that could link with your compact to strengthen its impact?

# Evaluate the Results of the Compact



After you get your compact up and running, the next question is: "How do you know whether or not your compact is working?" Many times, when we make a change, we are eager to see the results immediately. With the compact, you can chart long-term changes and improvements. That's why evaluation is so important. Evaluation can show you important continuous improvement.

Evaluation also sends a signal that your school is serious about making its family-school compact work. You need to know more than whether a compact is in place. You need to know more than whether it's working. You need to know *what's* working. Evaluation will help you pinpoint your progress. Your school needs this information to help all members of the partnership—schools, families, students, and community members—reach their potential.

Data can be a powerful catalyst for change. When Milwaukee Public Schools instituted a new math assessment that required students to apply math concepts, think analytically, and show their work, 70 percent of the first high school students to take the test failed. Instead of just blaming the test, some school and community leaders shouldered the responsibility. Teachers began changing their classroom habits. High schools started after-school and Saturday tutoring sessions in math. Churches and businesses donated school supplies and volunteered tutors. Attendance at PTA meetings rose. With that kind of support and coordinated effort, more than 80 percent of the next Milwaukee high school class to take the test passed it.

## Indicators of success

You don't have to be a professor or a statistician to use and understand data. The following tables display three useful indicators you can use—namely, continuous improvement, comparative performance, and absolute performance.

**Continuous improvement marks the progress of doing better than before.** Although schools start at different levels of achievement, all can set a goal of improvement. Improvement requires having a baseline and comparing information over time. This chart shows a steady increase or continuous improvement between 1990 and 1996 in the number of fourth-graders in the United States who perform at the basic level or above in math.

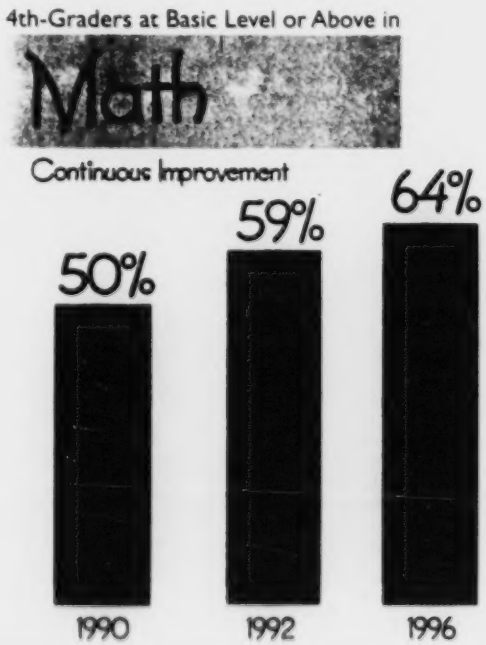
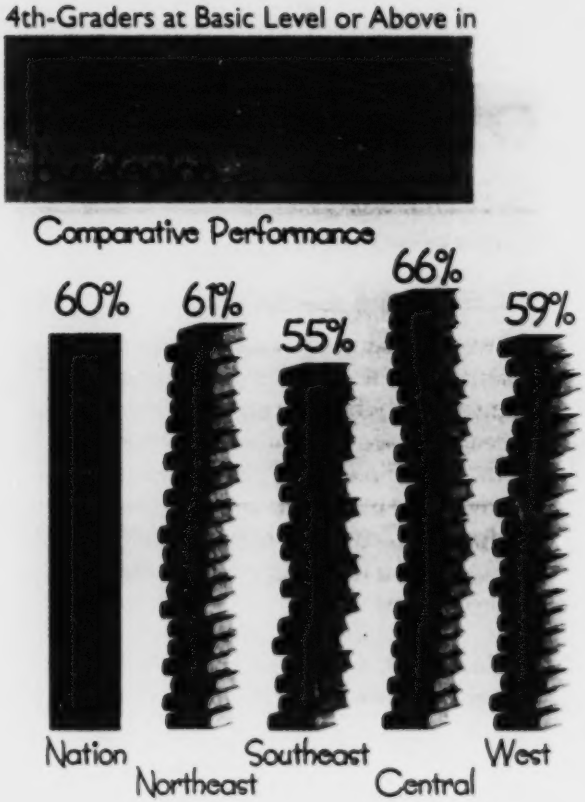
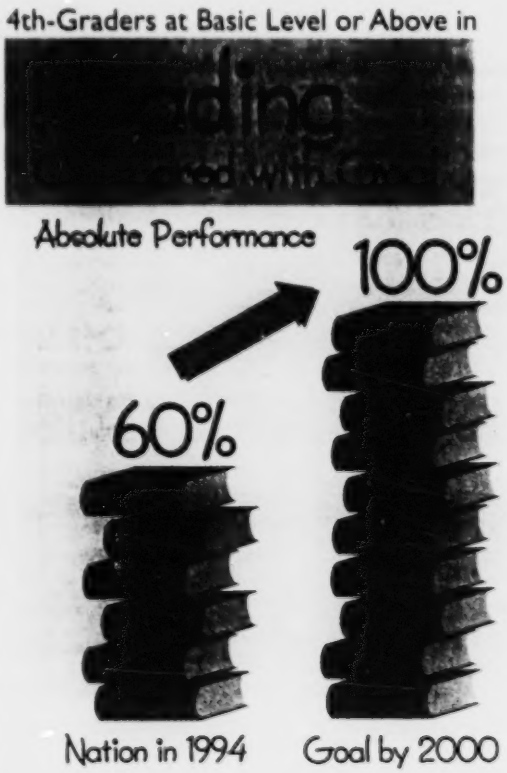



Chart Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1996.

Step 4

**Comparative performance shows whether you are doing as well as or better than other schools.** Some common forms of comparison are (1) with schools in your state or in the whole country that serve children from families with similar characteristics, such as similar income level; (2) with schools of similar size; or (3) with schools located in similar settings—urban, suburban, or rural. You can use the results of the comparison to gauge your own school's relative performance. This chart benchmarks regions against one another and against the nationwide average for fourth-grade reading achievement.




**Absolute performance indicates whether you're doing as well as or better than your school's desired level of performance.** This chart shows what the national goal of all children reading at the basic level or above is and how fourth-graders in 1994 compared with this goal.

Chart Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1994.

## How to get data

To initiate your evaluation process, you will need to collect "baseline" information—information on how your school is doing now. This information provides a starting point from which to measure your progress. To do this, you'll need to consult current and various sources of information that report the results you've agreed to measure. No one source will give you all the information you need. Some possible sources of data include:

**School profiles.** The new Title I law requires the creation of school profiles so that parents and members of the community know how well your school is performing in areas such as student achievement, support for learning at school and outside school, communication, and training.

**Administrative records.** Using existing records is time- and cost-effective because much information is routinely collected through normal recordkeeping (for example, records of student test scores, student absenteeism and attendance, family attendance at school events, and disciplinary actions). Such data, however, may not be the most appropriate for current needs. To prevent errors, be sure to review records for completeness and accuracy.

**Surveys.** You can survey school staff, families, and students on their perceptions and experiences—information that is critical to the success of the compact. Make sure that your survey responses are representative and that you have an adequate completion rate (professional surveys aim for 7 responses out of every 10 questions asked or a 70 percent response rate). You may want to ask the central district office to collect the information so that you can guarantee anonymity to survey participants.

**Focus groups.** Schools and organizations use these small group discussion sessions to test family involvement materials—pamphlets, videos, parent handbooks—for potential use and to explore issues in depth, such as barriers to family involvement. Focus groups can provide greater insight into your areas of concern, uncovering the reasons and motivations behind the numerical data you collect. It may be difficult, however, to find a representative group of participants who can give you the information you need.

## Lessons for using data*

**Use the process of collecting and analyzing data to bring educators and community members together.**

**Use data to focus attention and community action on real, not assumed, problems.**

**Beware of a picture painted in a single stroke.** No single piece of information can provide enough information to understand how to change schools. A combination of well-selected indicators is essential to painting a complete picture of the needs of students or the status of school performance.

**Beware of data that mask achievement gaps.** Attending to achievement gaps and disparities between groups of students requires data that are broken down by race, ethnicity, income, and proficiency with English. While it is sometimes difficult to get this kind of data, the importance of such data makes the effort worthwhile.

**Report local data strategically.** Once the data are analyzed, identify the problem you want to highlight and then report only the data relevant to that problem and its solution. Too many numbers can overwhelm and confuse your intended audience.



* Adapted from the Education Trust's *Community Data Guide* (1997).

**Double-check data . . . then check data again.** Data-driven change can be misdirected, and reform efforts can collapse if the data are inaccurate. Even a simple typographical error can undermine months of hard work and planning. Have a team of data checkers comb through data before you report or use the data in decision making.

**Keep data simple but exciting.** Data that are communicated in clear and accessible terms are powerful tools for engaging the support of the community for school improvement.

## Collect and use your own data

Agree on the results to measure. Because measurement takes resources and time, you may not want to measure all aspects of your compact each year. Identify for formal measurement those areas of student achievement and of the compact that your team believes are critical to the success of the school and its students at present. The two basic questions to answer are as follows:

- **Are students learning to high academic standards?**
- **Has the fulfillment of compact commitments helped to improve student learning?**

It's not enough to look at whether the compact commitments are being fulfilled. If students are not learning and achieving to high academic standards, compact partners need to rethink the nature of their commitments. To answer these questions, you need two kinds of data—data on student performance and data on key indicators of success.

**Always disaggregate your data**

Disaggregation shows how different populations in your school are doing. Disaggregating data will help you target your efforts toward those who most need your help. This chart disaggregates by parents' education level. It shows that a greater percentage of students whose parents have a college education read at the basic level or above. Depending on your needs or concerns, you may disaggregate by this or other means, such as gender, race, ethnicity, and family income.

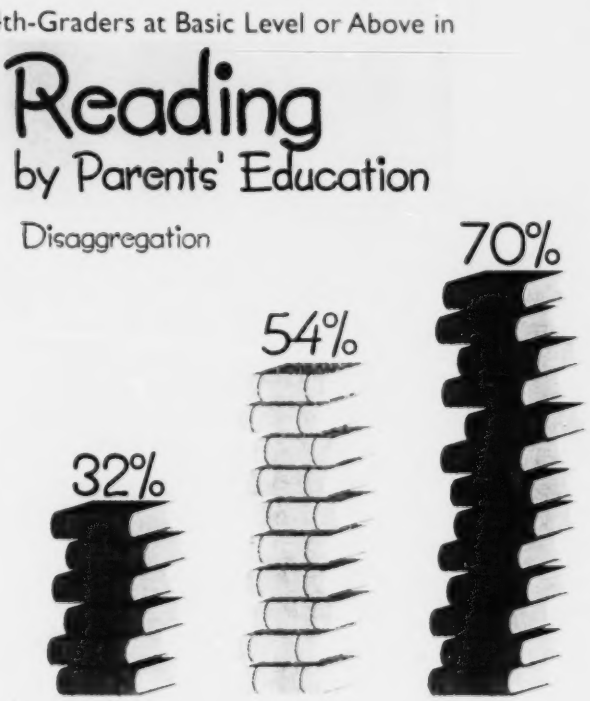



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Chart Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1994.

## Student performance

If the core of the compact is student learning, the focus of your evaluation should be student achievement.

You need to know how well students perform on assessments in reading, math, science, and other core subjects. The school profile may include this information. If not, the school or the district should be able to provide the data to the compact team. *Activity Sheet D: Student Performance* will help you record and use student performance results. Use the techniques found in the earlier tables to interpret the data. Here are some key questions to ask about student performance with reference to the indicators of success:

**Continuous improvement:** Do the student performance results show continuous improvement? How does performance this year compare with that in previous years?

**Comparative performance:** How do the student performance results at your school compare with the data for other schools in the district? With the statewide average? With the national averages?

**Absolute performance:** What do the student performance results show in relation to your school's desired level of performance? How far is the school from its current goals?

# 4 Evaluating the results of the compact

## Activity Sheet D: Student Performance

Directions: Record student performance data in the first column, and use the second column to interpret the data by comparing them to national, state, and local averages and to other schools' results. Make notes on areas of strength and weakness in the third column.

| State and local measures | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Current performance** | **Benchmark against**<br>• national averages<br>• state averages<br>• other district schools | **What are the school's strengths and weaknesses?** |
| English/Language arts | | | |
| Math | | | |
| Science | | | |
| Other (e.g. art and music, civics, foreign language, geography, history, occupational skills) | | | |

| National measures | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reading well and independently by the end of third grade | | **60 percent** of fourth-grade students nationally read at or above the basic level (NAEP, 1994). | |
| On track to take algebra in the eighth grade | | **20 percent** of eighth-grade students nationally reported taking algebra (NAEP, 1992). | |
| Taking courses that will prepare students for college entrance and for the workplace (for example, Advanced Placement, Tech-Prep, and School-to-Career opportunities) | | With increased participation in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, the number of AP exams with a score at 3 or above has **tripled** since 1982 (College Board, 1996). | |

# Evaluating the results of the compact

## Activity Sheet E: Key Indicators

Once the team has assessed current student performance, consider the factors that affect this performance—these factors become the shared responsibilities in the compact. This activity sheet will help you assess how well your compact partners are fulfilling their commitments and how well those commitments are succeeding in improving student learning and helping all children achieve. The key indicators will give you an idea of the kinds of data you need to gather to pinpoint areas of strength and weakness that are affecting student performance.

Directions: Based on your school's priorities and the data you have collected, fill in the appropriate blanks. Add your own indicators to a separate table.

| Shared responsibility for student learning and high achievement | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Schools** | **Families** | **Students** |
| **Setting high standards and high expectations** | | |
| **Standards:**<br>_____ % of families report that they are informed about what the school's standards are and what is required of students. | _____ % of families and _____ % of teachers report that families have high expectations of their children and expect them to do their best. | _____ % of teachers report that students are highly motivated, that they ask questions to clarify what is expected of them, and that they seek help when there is something they do not understand. |
| **Attendance:**<br>Daily attendance rate for teachers: _____ | _____ % of families and _____ % of teachers and school staff report that families monitor their children's attendance. | Daily attendance rate for students:_____<br>_____ % of students were absent ten or more days in the past year. |
| **Providing and supporting sound instruction** | | |
| **Instruction:**<br>_____ % of families and _____ % of students indicate that the instructional program is challenging, and that it is tailored to students who progress at different rates.<br>_____ % of teachers have credentials to teach in their subject. | | |
| **Homework:**<br>_____ % of families and _____ % of students report that meaningful homework is assigned and returned promptly with comments. | _____ % of families and _____ % of teachers report that families supervise completion of homework and sign off on completed assignments. | _____ % of teachers report that students come to school with homework complete. |

## Shared responsibility for student learning and high achievement (cont'd)

| Schools | Families | Students |
|---|---|---|
| **Providing and supporting sound instruction (cont'd)** | | |
| **Reading:**<br>_____ % of families report that the school provides them with challenging materials that support reading outside school (for example, reading lists and suggested activities). | _____ % of families report that family members read with their child or encourage their child to read daily. | _____ % of students report that they read at least 20 minutes a day. |
| **Math:**<br>_____ % of families report that the school makes clear the sequence of courses necessary for all students in order to take the advanced math courses in high school. | _____ % of families indicate that they understand the importance of their children taking algebra and geometry. | By middle school, _____ % of students indicate that they recognize the importance of taking algebra and geometry. |
| **Making schools safe and drug free** | | |
| _____ % of families and _____ % of students believe that the school discipline policy is clear and uniformly enforced.<br><br>Number of disciplinary incidents per year: _____<br><br>Suspension rate: _____<br><br>_____ % of students indicate they feel safe at school. | _____ % of families and _____ % of students report that families talk with their children about the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and weapons. | _____ % of students report using drugs or alcohol in the last month.<br><br>Number of fights on campus in the last year: _____ |
| **Applying modern technology** | | |
| _____ % of teachers report that they have an adequate number of computers and appropriate software to use in instruction.<br><br>_____ % of teachers indicate that they use computers and the Internet in classroom instruction. | _____ % of students report that their families and the school help them find ways to learn about technology outside school (whether at home, at a public library, or through a community program). | _____ % of students report regularly using computers for learning. |

## Shared responsibility for communication

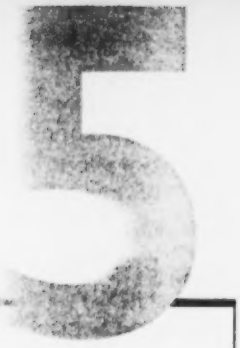
| Schools | Families | Students |
|---|---|---|
| **Communication on student progress** | | |
| _____ % of families report that the school holds parent-teacher conferences at convenient times and locations.<br><br>School translates information and materials for families into other languages.<br><br>_____ Yes _____ No | _____ % of families attend parent-teacher conferences. | _____ % of students report talking with their families about what they are doing at school. |
| **School climate** | | |
| _____ % of families and _____ % of students indicate that they feel welcome at the school and that the school respects their opinions. | _____ % of school staff and teachers indicate that families are responsive to their concerns. | _____ % of teachers report that students are respectful of one another and of teachers. |

## Shared responsibility for building capacity

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Training** | | |
| _____ % of teachers and school staff have participated in training in family involvement. | _____ % of families participate in workshops on achieving higher standards to learn how they can help their children. | |
| **Volunteering** | | |
| _____ % of families report that the school provides high-quality, well-organized opportunities to volunteer at the school. | _____ % of families volunteer at the school.<br><br>_____ % of volunteers report that they actively recruit new families to help out at the school. | _____ % of students volunteer at the school or in the community |

## Notes

# Strengthen Your Compact



Parents, teachers, school staff, educators, students, community members—we all need to work together every day to reach the goals we have for our children. The compact is about striving to improve student achievement. A continuous assessment of how well all partners are doing in this effort will allow you to improve and strengthen your compact. At least once a year, your school team needs to review and revise your compact. But don't wait for formal revisions. Your school team can meet several times a year in order to use the information available to identify opportunities for improvement and to focus your efforts.

## Build on your success

Within each compact area, some aspects will be working better than others. For those parts of your compact that seem to be working, what are the reasons? What can you learn from your effective practices that may help improve other areas?

Think about how you can use your success to gain greater support for your school, for family involvement in your school, and for the compact itself. Publicize your achievements as a fulfillment of the compact.

As you reward yourself for good work, you will create greater interest in and enthusiasm for the compact.

## Identify areas in need of improvement

**Are the different partners to your compact *doing things right?***

That is, is your compact being followed? Are resources being allocated as intended? Are appropriate training and time being made available for family and community involvement to work?

**Are you *doing the right things?***

Does your compact include appropriate responsibilities and strategies? Does it address the needs of your school and your school community? Have your needs changed at all?

## Develop solutions

- Brainstorm as a team.
- Talk to other schools to see what's working for them.
- Conduct a focus group with members of your school community.

  To find out more about what's going on in the school, use the Education Excellence Partnership's questions related to standards found in *Activity Sheet A: Taking Stock of Standards* as a framework for discussion.

  To find out more about what's happening with your compact, use the questions in *Activity Sheet C: Check Your Pulse.*
- Consider using research-based approaches.

Look at whole school models, such as New American Schools, a nonprofit corporation that has tested seven models in communities and states across the nation. Consider other programs, such as the programs of the National Center for Family Literacy, MegaSkills by the Home and School Institute, Accelerated Schools, Family Math, and Reading Recovery.

Learn about the latest research. The U.S. Department of Education has new research on student performance in math and science available in the TIMMS Tool Kit.

Contact professional organizations for guidance in particular areas of concern.

- Search the Web for more information and resources.

  The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education Web page at **www.ed.gov/PFIE** is a great place to begin. Look in Appendix C for other resources on the Internet and elsewhere.

## Brainstorming session

In this section, you will find some ideas on how to overcome barriers that may arise as you implement your compact. In each example, schools, families, and communities joined together to develop an effective solution to a specific problem at the school. The solutions touch on all three areas of shared responsibility: student learning, communication, and building capacity through training and volunteering. What makes these solutions so effective is the initiative taken by the partners at the schools. Take a look at how a strong family-school-community partnership can help turn obstacles into opportunities.

### Shared responsibility for student learning and high achievement

**Problem: Students lose three to four months of reading skills over the summer.**

**Solution:** Kansas City, Missouri, uses READ*WRITE*NOW!, the summer reading component of the *America Reads Challenge*, in its three Rs project, Reinforcing Reading and Writing, which pairs Title I staff, local Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., and middle school volunteers with students as reading partners while providing the students with daily reading activities and experiences, such as visiting the library.

**Problem: School experiences disruptive and sometimes delinquent student behavior at school-sponsored events.**

**Solution:** At Beech Grove City Schools in Indiana, a group of fathers formed the "security dads" to ensure proper behavior through their presence at school-sponsored events. As a result of this effort, paternal involvement in school and in children's activities has increased, and student behavior at events has improved.

**Problem: Families are not sure what specific help their children may need to achieve to high academic standards.**

**Solution:** Parents at the Wendall Phillips Magnet School in Kansas City asked for and received weekly student progress reports to help them keep track of those areas in which their children needed to improve. One parent commented, "If I know what my child is studying, I can help him at home and can see what progress he is making."

## Shared responsibility for communication

**Problem: Families of Hispanic students are not involved at the school because of a language barrier.**

**Solution:** Hueco Elementary School in El Paso, Texas, conducts all family-school communications, parent workshops, and meetings in both Spanish and English. To ensure that all parents can participate actively in these events, the district purchased translation equipment with Title I funds.

**Problem: Teachers, school staff, and families are "too busy" to communicate.**

**Solution:** The Carter Lawrence Middle School in Nashville, Tennessee, added a telephone number for parents that provides a recorded message informing them of classroom and school activities. Parents can receive targeted voice messages about their own children's progress and can leave messages detailing their reactions and concerns.

**Problem: Parent-teacher conferences and other school meetings have low attendance.**

**Solution:** Buhrer Elementary School in Cleveland, Ohio, rejects the assumption that parents who don't show up at school are not interested. Instead, the school makes it easy for families to get involved in their children's education. Teachers hold parent conferences off campus in places closer to students' homes. The school also holds "block parent meetings" for those families who cannot attend school events because they live on the outskirts of the community and lack transportation. Block meetings, which take place every few months in a parent's home or a nearby library, address parents' concerns and offer an opportunity to discuss school-related information.

## Shared responsibility for building capacity through training and volunteering

**Problem: Students must pass the state assessment test to graduate from high school.**

**Solution:** Roosevelt High School in Dallas, Texas, enlists the help of parents to ensure that all students pass the test. They invited parents to an evening class to review the state assessment instrument and to discuss the skills their children are expected to demonstrate on the test. The school plans to hold workshops on a variety of topics that concern parents and students, such as getting ready for college.

**Problem: Teachers and school staff aren't sure how to work with families.**

**Solution:** In Stockton, California, "mentor parents"—trained at the district's parent resource center—spent 5,000 hours in the schools helping school staff improve family-school communication and parents' involvement in their children's learning. Among other activities, mentor parents conducted four workshops on obstacles to family involvement in schools, including parents' own negative experiences with school and teacher bias, which may result from cultural or language differences between teacher and parent.

**Problem:** _____

_____

_____

**Solution:** _____

_____

_____

_____

Step 5

## Conclusion

As you use *Activity Sheet F: Take Action* to create your action plan, remember that your compact is an action plan. It focuses the action of your partners on a goal of improved student learning and effective school performance, and it clarifies the specific responsibilities of each of your partners to help meet this goal. The compact process is not just five steps; it is a cycle of continuous improvement. Each step requires thinking, collaborating, action, and reflection. Continuous improvement means that you are constantly reviewing where you've been and looking ahead to determine where to go next.

Making your compact work will be a challenge, but it will be a rewarding challenge as you begin to see more and more students learning to high academic standards. Use the challenge to strengthen your family-school-community partnership for learning. The compact will help your school become a true learning community with standards of excellence for all partners.

# Strengthen Your Compact

## Activity Sheet F: Take Action

Directions: Based on Activity Sheets D and E, make a list of your strengths and weaknesses. Use the following worksheet to design an improvement plan.

**Area identified for improvement:** _____

**Why improvement is needed** (based on progress towards standards and local, state, and national comparisons):

_____

_____

**Improvement strategies.** How will you strengthen your actions in this area? What specific actions will you take with reference to learning, to communication, and to volunteering and training? How will each partner contribute to the effort?

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

3. _____

_____

_____

Do you need to make any specific changes to the compact document itself?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Step 5

## Notes

# Appendixes

Appendix A: Examples of Compacts

Appendix B: The Community Commitment

Appendix C: Key Resources

Appendix D: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education*

Survey and Comment Form*

* Also available as part of the set of black and white master activity sheets in the folder.

# Examples of Compacts



## Example no. 1

**Bemiss Elementary School**
**Spokane, Washington**

## Example no. 2

**Clinton Kelly Elementary School**
**Portland, Oregon**

## Example no. 3

**Jackson Preparatory Magnet School**
**Saint Paul, Minnesota**

## Example no. 4

**Roosevelt High School**
**Dallas, Texas**

## Example no. 5

**Riviera Elementary School**
**Palm Bay, Florida**

# Example no. 1

## Bemiss Elementary School, Spokane, Washington

*It is the mission of Bemiss Elementary School, in partnership with parents and community, to empower each child to achieve his or her fullest potential to become a lifelong learner and responsible citizen. We are committed to foster high expectations and promote positive attitudes to achieve equity and excellence in a safe and nurturing environment.*

### Community, Parents, Schools, and Students
### Partners in Each Child's Education • Success for All

**As a teacher, I, _____, will strive to**

- believe that each child can learn;
- respect and value the uniqueness of each child and his or her family;
- provide an environment that promotes active learning;
- enforce the Bemiss "Bees" in the classroom and throughout the school in a fair and consistent manner;
- assist each child in achieving the essential academic learning requirements;
- document ongoing assessment of each child's academic progress;
- maintain open lines of communication with students and parents;
- seek ways to involve parents in the school program; and
- demonstrate professional behavior and a positive attitude.

**As a parent/guardian, I, _____, will strive to**

- believe my child can learn;
- show respect and support for my child, the staff, and the school;
- see that my child attends school regularly and is on time;
- provide a quiet place for my child to study at home;
- encourage my child to complete all homework assignments;
- attend parent-teacher conferences;
- support the school in developing positive behaviors in my child;
- talk with my child about his or her school activities each day; and
- encourage my child to read at home and apply all their learning to daily life.

**As a student, I, _____, will strive to**

- believe that I can learn;
- show respect for myself, my school, and other people;
- always try to do my best in my work and my behavior;
- work cooperatively with students and staff;
- obey the Bemiss "Bees" in the classroom and throughout the school; and
- come to school prepared with my homework and supplies.

***As members of the Bemiss educational community, together we are partners in your child's education as we uphold the intent of this compact.***

As principal, I, _____, represent all Bemiss School staff in affirming this contract.

# Example no. 2

## Clinton Kelly Elementary School, Portland, Oregon

Effective schools are a result of families and school staff working together to ensure that children are successful in school. A compact is a voluntary agreement between two groups that firmly unites them. You are invited to be involved in a partnership with Kelly Elementary School.

### Kelly School Vision Statement

We are a family of learners dedicated to nurturing a strong sense of self among all students, staff, family, and community members.

When we have a strong sense of self—

- We respect ourselves, fellow human beings, and our earth.
- We value our differences and our connections.
- We have the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in and contribute to our community, country, and the family of nations.
- We believe in and have hope for the future.

### Student Pledge

**I will strive to. . .**

- Attend school regularly.
- Complete assignments and return homework on time to the teacher.
- Show respect for myself, other people, animals, and property.
- Accept responsibility for my own actions.
- Make an effort to do my best to learn.
- Resolve conflicts peacefully.

### Family Involvement

Parents and other significant adults are asked to agree to the following commitments as they are involved in assisting the school in ensuring a productive school experience for their children.

### Parent Pledge

*Schools as a community:*

- To help my children be successful by volunteering at school and / or providing other support to teachers.
- To attend school functions and parent-teacher conferences.

*A curriculum with coherence:*

- To be involved in the amount and content of my child's TV viewing and radio listening.
- To stay aware of what my child is learning, and communicate regularly with school staff and with my child.
- To assist with homework and read with my children every day.

*A climate for learning:*

- To provide adequate rest, food and medical attention so that my child is ready to learn.
- To help my child get to school on time and attend regularly.

### Staff Pledge

*School as a community:*

- Communicate and work with families to enhance students' learning.
- Respect the cultural differences of students and their families.
- Continue efforts to develop professionally.

*A curriculum with coherence:*

- Provide curriculum that promotes literacy through the study of literature, math, and the arts.
- Explain assignments clearly and provide homework that supports the curriculum.
- Encourage students and parents by providing information about student progress.

*A climate for learning:*

- Provide a safe, pleasant, and caring atmosphere.
- Provide resources to help all children be successful in their school experience.

*A commitment to character:*

- Maintain high expectations for myself, students, and other staff.
- Assist students in the development of a sense of personal and civic responsibility.
- Help students learn to resolve conflicts in an appropriate and positive manner.

Appendix A

# Example no. 3

## Jackson Prepatory Magnet School, Saint Paul, Minnesota

We, the Jackson School community, establish this compact in order to foster the core values of honesty, integrity, respect, trust and responsibility and to support the success of Jackson students.

### As a parent/caregiver I pledge to:

- Maintain and foster high standards of academic achievement and positive behavior.
- Find out how my child is doing by attending conferences, looking at my child's schoolwork, or calling the school.
- Spend time each day with my child reading, writing, listening, or just talking.
- Respect, love, and encourage my child's growth and ideas.
- Help my child to resolve conflicts in positive, non-violent ways.

Parent/caregiver signature _____

### As a Jackson School staff member I pledge to:

- Maintain and foster high standards of academic achievement and positive behavior.
- Respectfully and accurately inform parents of their child's progress.
- Have high expectations for myself, students, and other staff.
- Respect the cultural differences of students, their families, and other staff.
- Help children to resolve conflicts in positive, nonviolent ways.

Staff signature _____

### As a Jackson School student I pledge to:

- Work hard to do my best in class and complete my homework.
- Discuss with my parents what I am learning in school.
- Have a positive attitude towards self, others, school, and learning.
- Respect the cultural differences of other students, their families, and staff.
- Work to resolve conflicts in positive, nonviolent ways.

Student signature _____

# Example no. 4

**Roosevelt High School, Dallas, Texas**

The purpose of the parent-school compact is to communicate a common understanding of home and school responsibilities to assure that every student attains high standards and a quality education.

## The parents' responsibility

- As an involved parent, I will support my son / daughter by ensuring that they attend school daily and arrive to school on time.
- I will encourage my son / daughter to participate in at least one extracurricular activity.
- I will seek information regarding my son's / daughter's progress by conferring with teachers, principals and other school district personnel.
- I will attend districtwide parent conferences and visit my son's / daughter's classrooms to discuss and participate in their education.
- I will participate in parent groups / activities to contribute to the decision-making process within the Dallas Public Schools.
- I will communicate positive information regarding teachers, principals, and other campus personnel when discussing school with my son / daughter.
- I will encourage my son / daughter to follow the rules and regulations of the school.
- I will encourage my son / daughter to dress according to the district's dress code.

## The school's responsibility

- Roosevelt High School will solicit parent and community input (through meetings, interviews, questionnaires, surveys, etc.) regarding the education of the students it serves.
- Roosevelt will offer flexible scheduling of parent meetings, training sessions, assemblies, school functions to maximize parent participation.
- Roosevelt will provide translations of written notifications and interpreters at parent conferences, parent meetings, and training sessions.
- Roosevelt will give assignments at least once per week. Assignments will be an extension of what is learned in the classroom and not merely "busy work" or untaught concepts that may cause parents and students undue stress at home.
- Parents will be notified of school events in a timely, efficient manner.
- Training sessions / workshops on diverse topics and issues will be offered to parents and community members.
- The school buildings will be used to foster the growth and advancement of the community by being offered for parent training workshops, ESL classes, adult basic education classes, computer classes, etc., before, during, and after the regular school day.
- Roosevelt will convey instructional thrusts and initiatives to parents at schoolwide meetings and parent conferences.
- Roosevelt will inform parents of the individual achievement levels of students.

Student _____

Parent _____

Teacher _____

# Example no. 5

**Riviera Elementary School, Palm Bay, Florida**

It is our belief that student performance will improve as a result of our cooperative efforts to support this compact. This is a three-way partnership with a specific goal in mind. It is imperative that each person assume his or her responsibilities.

## Parent responsibilities

- Provide a quiet place to do homework.
- Set aside a specific time to do homework.
- Study area should be well-lit and well-equipped with pens/pencils, paper, ruler, crayons/markers, glue, dictionary, etc.
- Look over homework assignments to check for understanding.
- Be available to assist.
- Sign and return all papers that require a parent's or guardian's signature.
- Encourage positive attitudes toward school.
- Require regular school attendance.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences.

## Student responsibilities

- Ask the teacher any questions about the homework.
- Take home materials and information needed to complete the assignment.
- Complete homework in a thorough, legible, and timely manner.
- Return homework on time.
- Return signed homework form.
- Comply with school rules.
- Attend school regularly.
- Respect the personal rights and property of others.

## Teacher responsibilities

- Provide quality teaching and leadership.
- Assign homework using grade-level form.
- Coordinate with other programs to make sure nightly assignments do not exceed time limits.
- Give corrective feedback.
- Recognize that students are accountable for every assignment.
- Check that homework has been completed and homework form has been signed by parent/guardian.
- Respect cultural, racial, and ethnic differences.
- Hold at least two teacher-parent conferences.

Student signature _____

Parent signature _____

Teacher signature _____

# The Community Commitment

The community partnership is a natural expansion of the family-school partnership. You can get concerned community members, elected officials, business representatives, religious leaders, and many others involved in ways that support student learning. If you would like to develop a formal partnership that identifies the specific responsibilities of the community, the framework below includes examples of commitments that a community can make.

## Shared responsibility for learning

**Setting high standards and high expectations**

- Keep informed about the academic standards and the performance of your local schools.

**Providing and supporting sound instruction**

- Organize and participate in tutoring and mentoring programs to provide reading partners with whom children can read for 30 minutes a day.

**Making schools safe and drug free**

- Open other community facilities and churches as neighborhood-based safe havens and meeting sites for parent-teacher conferences and other school-related gatherings.
- Sponsor, plan, and participate in alcohol- and drug-free activities (e.g., dances, proms, graduation parties).
- Sponsor bands, athletics, arts programs, clubs, and other wholesome activities for students.

**Applying modern technology**

- Help teachers, students, and their families learn to use computers and the Internet.
- Support, organize, and participate in Net Day and other activities to wire schools.
- Donate the technology and support necessary for school projects, whether it be computers, computer training, or telephones for teachers or for a homework hotline.

## Shared responsibility for communication

- Share expertise to help prepare students to go to college and to find good jobs (for example, financial planning for college).
- Build a community network of concerned adults, including community leaders, law enforcement officers, journalists, and others, to talk about and publicize issues of concern to the schools and to the community (for example, school safety, school modernization).

## Shared responsibility for building capacity through training and volunteering

- Encourage employers to adopt flexible employee leave policies that accommodate parent-teacher conferences and volunteering opportunities in the schools.
- Use businesses and community organizations to help students with special projects.

# Key Resources

Useful advice, fine materials, and outstanding programs are available to help form and strengthen partnerships for learning, but it is important to know where to find this help.

## For more information about compacts and Title I:

Title I of the Improving America's Schools Act, which provides resources to schools needing extra help to strengthen programs in the basics and core academics, requires the creation of family-school compacts in all Title I schools. The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education posts valuable information and resources about Title I, school improvement, and other topics on its Web site at **www.ed.gov/offices/OESE**.

**The Partnership for Family Involvement**
**www.ed.gov/PFIE/titlei.html**

The Partner for Family Involvement's web site provides a link to a Web page for compacts where you can find this publication along with examples of compacts and the compact process and links to other related Internet resources. Please feel free to send your comments, tips, and ideas to the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education for possible inclusion on the Web site.

## Organizations that can help:

**National Coalition of Title I Parents**
1352 Q Street NW, 2nd Floor East
Washington, DC 20005
**E-mail: NCTIC1P.aol.com**

**Education Trust**
1725 K Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006
202-293-1217

## Publications:


Channing L. Bete Co., Inc. 1997. *About parent-school compacts*. South Deerfield, MA: Author.

The Education Trust. 1996. *A new chance: making the most of Title I*. Washington, DC: Author.

MacFarlane, Eleanor C. 1995. *Boost family involvement: How to make your program succeed under the new Title I guidelines*. Bloomington, IN: Family Literacy Center.

RMC Research. 1996. *Parents ask about compacts*. Portsmouth, NH: Author.

- 1996. *Parents ask about parent involvement policies*. Portsmouth, NH: Author.
- 1996. *Parents ask about school profiles*. Portsmouth, NH: Author.
- 1996. *Parents ask about Title I*. Portsmouth, NH: Author.

Rogers, Mimi. 1995. *Planning for Title I programs: Guidelines for parents, advocates, and educators*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education.

## For more information about standards:

**Local and state activities.** Contact your local school district or state department of education to find out how your community and state are developing and setting higher education and occupation standards.

**The Goals 2000: Educate America Act** provides funding to help schools raise standards and improve their accountability. It encourages communities to create their own school improvement plans. For information, telephone your state education department or the U.S. Department of Education at 202-401-0039.

**The Education Excellence Partnership** has published a booklet about standards for parents called *Strengthening your child's academic future*. To get your copy, call 1-800-382-3762.

**The National Urban League** has a new video, *Putting standards into action*, to help parents understand what academic standards are and what they can do to help children reach them. For more information, call 212-558-5450.

### Internet resources:

**Developing Educational Standards**
**putwest.boces.org/standards.html**

This Internet address takes you to an outstanding Web site run by Putnam Valley Schools, Putnam Valley, New York, which posts links to other sites with K-12 education standards and curriculum framework documents, including sites from every state.

**Achieve**
**www.achieve.org**

Achieve Resource Center on Standards, Assessment, Accountability, and Technology is home to a National Clearinghouse database that contains easily accessible information on standards-based education reform for educators, governors, and business leaders.

**Eisenhower National Clearinghouse's "Standards and Frameworks"**
**www.enc.org**

The Eisenhower National Clearinghouse contains useful information about curricula, standards, and frameworks for mathematics and science.

**American Federation of Teachers, Educational Issues Department**
**www.aft.org/edissues.htm**

Find out more about the American Federation of Teachers' campaign for high standards at the Web site, which mentions related resources and information about standards nationally and internationally.

**Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL)**
**www.mcrel.org**

McREL, one of the U.S. Department of Education's 10 regional labs, maintains a database on standards and benchmarks. A number of its publications on standards also are available on-line.

### Organizations that can help:

**American Federation of Teachers**
555 New Jersey Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-879-4400
**www.aft.org**

**Business Coalition for Education Reform**
c/o National Alliance of Business
1201 New York Avenue NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
202-289-2888
**www.bcer.org and www.nab.com**

**Business Roundtable**
1615 L Street NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20036
**www.brtable.org**

**Council for Basic Education**
1319 F Street NW
Washington, DC 20004
202-347-4171
**www.c-b-e.org**

**Council of Chief State School Officers**
1 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001-1431
202-408-5505
**www.ccsso.org**

**Education Excellence Partnership**
1615 L Street NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20036
1-800-382-3762

**National Education Association**
1201 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-833-4000
**www.nea.org**

**National Education Goals Panel**
1255 22nd Street NW
Suite 502
Washington, DC 20037
202-724-0015
**www.negp.gov**

**National Governors' Association**
444 North Capitol Street NW
Suite 267
Washington, DC 20001
202-624-5300
**www.nga.org**

**U.S. Chamber of Commerce**
**Center for Workforce Preparation**
1615 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20062
202-463-5525

## Publications available from the U.S. Department of Education (Call 1-800-USA-LEARN):

*Strengthening your child's academic future*. 1997. Educational Excellence Partnership.

*Improving America's schools: A newsletter on issues in school reform*. Spring 1996. "Standards: What are they?"

*Moving America to the head of the class*. 1995. Education Excellence Partnership.

*Teachers and GOALS 2000: Leading the journey toward high standards for all students*. June 1995.

## Other publications:

American Federation of Teachers. 1997. *Making standards matter: An annual fifty-state report on efforts to raise academic standards*. Washington, DC: Author.

Council for Basic Education. 1996. *How does your school measure up?* Washington, DC: Author.

Pritchard, Ivor. 1996. *Judging standards in standards-based reform*. Washington, DC: Council for Basic Education.

RMC Research. 1996. *Parents ask about standards*. Portsmouth, NH: Author.

## For more information about family involvement:

**Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education**. More information and sign-on forms may be found in Appendix D.

**Parental Information and Resource Centers** in 40 states have been funded through the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. For more information on these centers, telephone the U.S. Department of Education at 202-401-0039.

**The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** funds 70 Parent Training and Information Projects across the 50 states to help parents of children with disabilities. To get a copy of *A Directory of Parent Training and Information Projects* and for more information, telephone the National Information Center for Children & Youth with Disabilities at 1-800-695-0285.

## Publications available from the U.S. Department of Education:

### The following are available free of charge at 1-800-USA-LEARN

(Many are also available on the Internet at **www.ed.gov.**)

*Strong families, strong schools: Building community partnerships for learning*. This report summarizes 30 years of research showing that greater family involvement in children's learning is crucial to providing a good education and a safe, disciplined learning environment for every student. The report, released as part of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, suggests what schools, communities, businesses, government, and families themselves can do to strengthen family involvement in children's learning.

*Reaching all families: Creating family-friendly schools*. This publication presents accumulated knowledge and fresh ideas on school outreach strategies to reach out to all families and help get them involved in their children's education.

*America Goes Back to School partners' activity guide*. This publication encourages parents, citizens, and all Americans to rally around their local schools and make a commitment to support education improvement throughout the year.

*Keeping schools open as community learning centers: Extending learning in a safe, drug-free environment before and after school*. This guidebook is designed to help schools and community-based organizations begin the process of keeping schools open for children and families beyond the traditional school hours to provide access to valuable education resources in a building free of violence and drugs.

*Employers, families and education*. This publication explores the benefits of family-friendly policies for employers and employees focused on educational activities for children.

Brochures on family involvement—

- *Team up for kids! How schools can support family involvement in education*
- *Get involved! How parents and families can help their children do better in school*
- *Be family-friendly: It's good business!*
- *Join together for kids! How communities can support family involvement in education*
- *Summer home learning recipes*. Developed by the Home and School Institute, these four brochures contain reading, writing, math, and science activities that parents can do with their children by age groups.

*America Reads Challenge: READ*WRITE*NOW! basic kit*. Developed by reading experts using the best research and successful experiences of teachers, librarians, and families, this kit can help increase and maintain reading skills for all children—including those with disabilities—during the summer.

*Preparing your child for college*. This resource book is designed to help students, their parents, and others prepare academically and financially for college.

*Getting ready for college early*. This booklet is designed to help parents and students in the middle and junior high school years understand the steps needed to get ready for college.

## The following are available through the National Library of Education at 1-800-424-1616.

- *Overcoming barriers to family involvement in Title I schools: Report to Congress*, February 1997.
- *Family involvement in children's education: Successful local approaches: An idea book*, June 1997.
- *Learning Partners* series.
- *Helping your child* series, including:
  - *Helping your child learn math*
  - *Helping your child learn to read*
  - *Helping your child learn science*
  - *Helping your child learn history*
  - *Helping your child get ready for school*
  - *Helping your child use the library*
  - *Como ayudar a su hijos a usar la biblioteca*
  - *Helping your child with homework*
  - *Helping your child succeed in school*

## Internet resources:

**National Parent Information Network (NPIN)**
**www.aspensys.com/eric**

To reach this Web site, click on "Links to all ERIC sites" and then scroll down until you reach the NPIN link. At this Web site, you will find a collection of materials for parents and parent educators, monthly news for parents, information about the Parenting Discussion List (listserv), and instructions for using Parents' AskERIC, a component of the award-winning AskERIC project, which responds to e-mail questions on child development, child care, parenting, and child rearing.

**Family Education Network**
**www.familyeducation.com**

At this Web site, you will find information about learning at home and at school; links to school Web sites and other related sites; updates on education-related legislation; numerous activities and tips for parents; and a forum for discussion of related topics.

**The Children, Youth, and Family Consortium, University of Minnesota**
**www.cyfc.umn.edu**

The Children, Youth, and Family Consortium provides information on health and education for children and families. Also, in conjunction with the vice president's Family Reunion Conference on Families and Learning, the Web site includes postings of family involvement programs. Read what other communities are doing or post your own program.

## Organizations that can help:

**ASPIRA Association, Inc.**
1444 Eye Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
202-835-3600

**Betty Phillips Center for Parenthood Education**
Box 81, Peabody College of Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN 37203
615-322-8080

**Family Geography Challenge**
National Geographic Society
1145 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-828-6686

**Family Math**
Lawrence Hall of Science
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720-5200
510-642-1823

**Families and Work Institute**
330 Seventh Avenue, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10001
212-465-2044
**www.familiesandworkinst.org**

**HIPPY USA**
Teachers College, Box 113
525 West 120th Street
New York, NY 10027
212-678-3500
**www.c3pg.com/hippy.htm**

**Institute for Responsive Education**
50 Nightingale Hall
Northeastern University
Boston, MA 02115
617-373-2595

**MegaSkills Education Center**
The Home and School Institute
1500 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20005
202-466-3633
**www.megaskillshsi.org**

**Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) Community Education and Public Policy**
634 South Spring Street
Los Angeles CA 90014
213-629-0839

**National Association for Partners in Education**
901 North Pitt Street, Suite 320
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-836-4880

**National Association of School Psychologists**
4340 East West Highway, Suite 402
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-657-0270

**National Black Child Development Institute**
1023 15th Street NW, Suite 600
Washington DC 20005
202-387-1281

**National Center for Family Literacy**
Waterfront Plaza, Suite 200
325 West Main Street
Louisville, KY 40202-4251
502-584-1133

**The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education**
1201 16th Street NW, Box 39
Washington, DC 20036
202-822-8405
**www.ncpie.org**

**National Community Education Association**
3929 Old Lee Highway, Suite 91A
Fairfax, VA 22030-2401
703-359-8973
**www.ncl.org/anr/partners/ncea.htm**

**National Network of Partnerships-2000 Schools**
Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
Johns Hopkins University
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
410-516-8818
**www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000**

**The National PTA**
330 North Wabash Avenue, Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60611-3690
312-670-6782
**www.pta.org**

**National Urban League**
500 East 62nd Street
New York, NY 10021
1-888-326-9688
**www.nul.org**

**Parents as Teachers National Center**
10176 Corporate Square Drive, Suite 230
St. Louis, MO 63132
314-432-4330
**www.patnc.org**

### Other publications:


Bamber, Chrissie, Nancy Berla, and Anne T. Henderson. 1997. *Learning from others: Good programs and successful campaigns.* Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education and the Academy for Educational Development.

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Epstein, Joyce L. May 1995. *School, family, community partnerships: Caring for the children we share.* Phi Delta Kappan, vol. 77, no. 9: 701-12.

Harvard Education Newsletter. September-October 1997. *Special issue on parent involvement.* Cambridge, MA (1-800-513-0763). **hugse1.harvard.edu/~hepg/helso97.html**

Henderson, A. 1987. *The evidence continues to grow: Parent involvement improves student achievement.* Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Henderson, A. T., & Berla, N. 1994. *A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement.* Washington, DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Rich, Dorothy. 1997. *MegaSkills: Building children's achievement for the information age.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

1994. *The new MegaSkills bond.* Washington, DC: Dorothy Rich Associates.

1997. *What do we say: What do we do?: Vital solutions for children's educational success.* New York: Forge.

1997. *What do I say? What do I do? Problem solving handbook.* Washington, DC: Home and School Institute.

Struck, Darla, ed. 1995. *Involving parents in education.* Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen Publications.

Warner, Carolyn with Marilyn Curry. 1997. *Everybody's House—The schoolhouse: Best techniques for connecting home, school, and community.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.


## For more information about measurement and evaluation:

### Internet resources:

**www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/eval** Consult the Web site of the Planning and Evaluation Service, a division within the Office of the Under Secretary at the U.S. Department of Education. At this Web site, you will find general resources and links related to measurement and evaluation along with summaries of major studies of federal programs undertaken by the Planning and Evaluation Service.

### Publications :


The Education Trust. 1997. *Education watch: Community data guide.* Washington, DC: Author.

# The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

D

PARTNERSHIP for Family Involvement in Education

# The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

**"Better Education Is Everybody's Business."**
*U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley*

***What is the Partnership's mission?*** To promote children's learning through the development of family-school-community partnerships.

***Who are the Partners for Learning?*** Thousands of family, school, community, employer and religious groups comprise the Partnership. They have come together to support student learning to high standards. These Partners represent a growing grassroots movement across this country organized into four areas:

- "Family-School Partners for Learning" support school-home partnerships where communication and mutual responsibility for children's learning to high standards are key.
- "Employers for Learning" adopt family- and student-friendly business practices, such as providing leave time to attend parent conferences and volunteer in school, providing parent training and child care, and working with neighborhood schools.
- "Community/Cultural Organizations for Learning" support learning communities through organized before- and after-school and summer activities. They volunteer in the schools, help to make streets safe for children, and support supervised recreational activities.
- "Religious Organizations for Learning" provide parent education programs and reading tutoring programs for children, sponsor cultural programs, make their buildings available for organized activities, and support out-of-school learning.

***What are the benefits of joining the Partnership?*** Partners improve their effectiveness by connecting with other groups and drawing on each others' strengths. The benefits of being part of a coordinated effort are key: Partners learn about and share the latest and best practices from other Partner organizations. Recognition is earned for organizations' visible commitments at the national, state, and local levels. Members of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education receive support through conferences, publications and on-going communication, including newsletters and an Internet home page at **www.ed.gov/PFIE**.

***What are activities that the Partnership supports?*** As the Partnership grows, special projects support family involvement and student learning across communities:

- **READ*WRITE*NOW!**, an intensive summer component to the **America Reads Challenge**, encourages children's reading and writing with a reading partner 30 minutes a day.
- **America Goes Back to School: Answering the President's Call to Action** encourages every American to go back to school each fall to share their talents and experiences. Taking the challenge means addressing local educational concerns on a continuous basis and making a year-long commitment to learning.
- **Getting Ready for College Early**, an initiative to encourage all students to take courses they need to enter college and to inform parents of the sequence of courses their child needs to take, as well as the financial planning involved. To be launched in winter 1998.

***How can your organization join the Partnership?*** If your organization wants to become a **Partner for Learning** fill out one of the following sign-on sheets and send it in. You will receive your Partnership member's kit soon after.

Appendix D

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PARTNERSHIP for Family Involvement in Education

# Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education...

## Family-School Partnership Promise

Families and schools across America are increasingly accepting mutual responsibility for children's learning. When families are involved in children's learning, at school and at home, schools work better and students learn more. Schools and families are working with employers and community organizations to develop local partnerships that support a safe school environment where students learn to challenging standards. By working together, exchanging information, sharing decision-making, and collaborating in children's learning, everyone can contribute to the education process.

***Coming together as families, local school board governance, administration, teachers and school staff, we form this partnership and affirm the importance of family involvement in children's learning. We pledge to:***

- Share responsibility at school and at home to give students a better education and a good start in life.
- Our school will be welcoming to families; reach out to families before problems arise; offer challenging courses; create safe and drug-free learning environments; organize tutoring and other opportunities to improve student learning; and support families to be included in the school decision-making process.
- Our families will monitor student attendance, homework completion and television watching; take the time to talk with and listen to their children; become acquainted with teachers, administrators and school staff; read with younger children and share a good book with a teen; volunteer in school when possible; and participate in the school decision-making process.
- Promote effective two-way communication between families and schools, by schools reducing educational jargon and breaking down cultural and language barriers and by families staying in touch with the school.
- Provide opportunities for families to learn how to help their children succeed in school and for school staff to work with families.
- Support family-school efforts to improve student learning by reviewing progress regularly and strengthening cooperative actions.

*We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning. (Please type or print the following.)*

**School Name:** _____

**School Address:** _____

**City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

**School Phone:** _____ **Fax:** _____ **E-mail:** _____

**Principal:** _____ **Signature:** _____

**Parent Organization Representative:** _____ **Signature:** _____

**Teacher Representative:** _____ **Signature:** _____

**School Staff Representative:** _____ **Signature:** _____

**Contact Person:** _____ **Title:** _____ **Contact Phone:** _____

Send to: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173 or fax to 202-205-9133 to receive your **Family-School Partnership Promise Certificate**.

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in Education

# Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education...

## The Community Promise

A strong and vigorous community, one that is supportive of all citizens, depends upon an educated, skilled, competent and involved citizenry. Schools, families, and community organizations are increasingly accepting mutual responsibility for children's learning. By working together, exchanging information, sharing decision-making, and collaborating in children's learning, everyone can contribute to the educational process. As a community-based organization, we support family-school compacts and affirm the importance of family-community involvement in students' learning.

***We commit to involve our organization and its community members in a family-school-community partnership. By coming together with other organizations, we will:***

- Make safe schools/safe neighborhoods a priority.
- Combat alcohol, drugs, and violence in and around schools and neighborhoods.
- Reinforce parenting skills using community institutions to provide family and literacy training and referral services.
- Provide mentoring and homework help programs so that children may be assured of tutoring and guidance from knowledgeable and responsible adults.
- Come together to coordinate delivery of services and to eliminate duplication of efforts.
- Help develop and sponsor affordable and quality after-school, weekend and summer learning, cultural, and community recreational activities.
- Support school improvement efforts in the local community.
- Support and become informed about school governance issues.
- Encourage schools to be involved in the life of the community, through co-sponsorship of community outreach activities of partner organizations.

---

*We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit our community organization to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning. (Please type or print the following information.)*

**Official:** _____ **Signature:** _____

**Community Group:** _____ **Date:** _____

**Contact Person:** _____ **Title:** _____

**Address:** _____

**City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

**Phone:** _____ **Fax:** _____ **E-Mail:** _____

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# Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education...

PARTNERSHIP for Family Involvement in Education

## Employers for Learning Promise

**A** strong and vigorous economy, for our employers and our nation, depends upon an educated, skilled, and competent citizenry. Today's students are tomorrow's citizens, and are our long-term investments for the future.

Employers play an important role in the school-improvement efforts on local, state, and national levels. We can now multiply the effectiveness of such efforts by enlisting our current employees as partners in the campaign to support and better the American educational system. Any company, regardless of its size, can take steps to support parents in its workforce and to support local education.

Over 30 years of research shows that greater family and adult involvement in children's learning is a critical link to achieving a high-quality education.

***Small investments that enable employee participation in students' academic success, and in our education system, lead to a win/win for everyone:***

- ***Employers Win*** by helping prepare a highly skilled and globally competitive workforce.
- ***Employees Win*** by making positive differences in children's education and in their local schools.
- ***Schools Win*** from increased parental and community involvement.
- ***Students Win*** from better education.

*We recognize there are many ways to get started:*

- Contact a local school to discuss opportunities for cooperation.
- Explore with employees ways in which they can help children learn.
- Explore with employees ways in which they can help local schools better educate their students.
- Explore policies and practices to encourage and enable employee involvement in schools and learning.
- Contact the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education for information.

*We commit to:*

- Identify a contact person, authorized to explore and develop options for company involvement in our family-school-community initiatives.
- Take action to implement programs.
- Share best practices after evaluating programs annually.
- Form partnerships with other stakeholders to promote, implement, and improve family-friendly policies and practices.

---

*We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit our organization to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning. (Please type or print the following information.)*

**President/CEO:** _____ **Signature:** _____

**Company/Organization:** _____ **Date:** _____

**Contact Person:** _____ **Title:** _____

**Address:** _____

**City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

**Phone:** _____ **Fax:** _____ **E-Mail:** _____

Send to: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173 or fax to 202-205-9133 to receive your **Employers for Learning Promise Certificate.**

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# Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education...

PARTNERSHIP for Family Involvement in Education

## Statement of Common Purpose Among Religious Communities Supporting Family Involvement in Learning

*"Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray"*
*Proverbs 22:6*

As members of religious communities from across the land, we join to affirm the vital and enduring role of families in the education of children. We have always regarded families--and parents in particular--as the primary teachers of children. Encouraged by Secretary of Education Richard Riley's concern for all children and his commitment to the role of families in educating children, we call upon all people of good will to stand as one with us in support of families' participation in children's learning.

Parents and guardians need to immerse themselves in the education of their children as never before. Children need the immediate and constant support of their families. But there are other voices at odds with these goals: the voices of poverty, loneliness, and fear. Because of this, there are children who do not attend school regularly, whose test scores and grades falter, who have too much idle time, and whose parents are absent, too overwhelmed or too busy to spend time reading, talking, praying, playing, listening, helping or encouraging them.

Religious communities hear this cry. It is with this knowledge and in our unique roles that we stand united in our commitment to the involvement of family members in the education of children. We believe the participation of family members in the education and spiritual development of young people is fundamental to a child's preparation for adulthood and the responsibilities of citizenship. Our nation's future depends upon a shared concern for the education of young people.

It is imperative that religious communities join together with governments, community organizations, businesses, and public and private schools in striving to provide families, parents, grandparents, foster parents, guardians, or extended family members with the information, skills, tools, and opportunities that will encourage their participation in the total education of their children, including character education. We are committed to working together to improve children's learning through family involvement partnerships.

We are thankful for the blessings of religious liberty, a sacred trust, stated in the Declaration of Independence and guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution, that enables the members of all faiths to work together freely and openly for the common good. As beneficiaries of this great legacy, we pledge our support in encouraging family involvement in the education of children.

We call upon all citizens, religious communities, community organizations, and businesses to do their share. We urge family members to become actively involved in their children's education, religious communities to work to better understand and meet educational and family needs, community organizations to sponsor meaningful youth- and family-oriented activities, and businesses to adopt family-friendly policies in the workplace. Governments need to promote public policies that encourage greater family involvement in the education of all children. We challenge our society to value and nurture our children of today so that they can be productive citizens of tomorrow.

---

*We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit our religious organization to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning. (Please type or print the following information.)*

**Official:** _____ **Signature:** _____

**House of Worship/Religious Organization:** _____ **Date:** _____

**National Affiliation/Denomination:** _____

**Contact Person:** _____ **Title:** _____

**Address:** _____

**City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

**Phone:** _____ **Fax:** _____ **E-Mail:** _____

Send to: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173 or fax to 202-205-9133 to receive your **Statement of Common Purpose Among Religious Communities Certificate.**

Appendix D



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# Survey and Comment Form

We value your opinions! Please let us know what you think about this action handbook.

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **This handbook:** | | | | |
| Is clear and understandable | | | | |
| Provides valuable information | | | | |
| Provides the right amount of information | | | | |
| Is presented in an accessible format | | | | |
| Will be valuable to my compact team | | | | |
| Can help create and strengthen partnerships | | | | |
| Can help improve student learning | | | | |
| **I wish there was more information provided on:** | | | | |
| What a compact is and what it can look like | | | | |
| Getting started | | | | |
| Writing the compact | | | | |
| Using your school's compact | | | | |
| Evaluating the results of the compact | | | | |
| Strengthening your compact | | | | |
| The activity sheets | | | | |
| Examples of what schools are doing | | | | |
| Key resources | | | | |
| The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education | | | | |

**Please feel free to add your own comments and return them to the following address:**

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-8173
Fax: 202-205-9133

# Acknowledgments

President Clinton released a preliminary edition of *A Compact for Learning* during his speech at the vice president's Sixth Family Reunion Conference in Nashville on June 25, 1997. The topic of the conference was "Families and Learning." The leadership shown by the president, the vice president, and many others working at the local level in support of family and community involvement in education has helped to frame this document.

In the spirit of the compact, this handbook represents the work of many people. Special appreciation goes to those who have participated in the review of this publication, including Vicki La Rock, Title I coordinator in Nebraska; Gail Hannas, Title I parenting specialist in Brevard County, Florida; Janet F. Carroll, Title I coordinator in Rhode Island; participants in the spring 1997 conference "Creating and Sustaining Family-School-Community Partnerships," sponsored by the Maryland State Department of Education and The Family Works; Hiawatha Fountain, Associate Superintendent for Montgomery County Public Schools, Maryland; principals in White Plains, New York; the parent organizations that field-tested the materials; Policy Studies Associates; MCS Printing Services; Priscilla Taylor for her editing services; National PTA Reflections Program for the cover artwork; ZGS Graphics; and the many others in the Planning and Evaluation Service and other offices of the U.S. Department of Education and elsewhere who contributed time, energy, and ideas to this publication.

Special thanks to U.S. Department of Education staff who commented on the document, including: Jennifer Ballen, Joanne Bogart, Daphne Hardcastle, Judith Johnson, Mary Jean LeTendre, Linda Mount, Val Plisko, Carol Rasco, Nancy Rhett, Elois Scott, Kirk Winters, Lorraine Wise, and Jacquelyn Zimmermann.

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# 1 Get Started

## Activity Sheet A: Taking Stock of Standards

**Directions:** The Education Excellence Partnership has developed the following set of questions related to academic standards at the local school level. These questions reflect the kind of information the school, its students and their families, and the community at large need to help all children achieve. Use the questions as an opening activity to help the compact team make a quick assessment of your school. For more information, see page 5 in the handbook.

### 1. What skills and knowledge will the students be expected to master this year?

- What are students expected to learn this year in key subjects like math, science, history, and English?
- Are there challenging academic standards in place at this school, and how do they compare with those in other school districts?
- How do teachers inform students about the academic standards they're expected to meet?
- What kinds of projects and assignments are in place to help students meet higher academic standards?

### 2. How will students be evaluated?

- What kind of information do teachers use to evaluate students' learning and the extent to which students are academically ready to move on to the next grade?
- How are grades determined in the classroom?
- Will students be able to take new national tests in fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math when they become available in 1999?

### 3. What can families do to stay more involved in their children's academic progress?

- What can families do at home to complement what is happening in the classroom?
- How can families know on a daily basis what homework has been assigned?
- How can families support teachers' efforts in implementing higher academic standards?

### 4. How does the school accommodate differences in learning?

- What if a student is a slow learner and falls behind, or is a fast learner and is bored?
- Are summer school, tutoring, or other programs available for students who need more help?

### 5. How are students prepared for further learning after high school?

- What learning opportunities exist outside the classroom to make learning more relevant to what happens in the real world?
- Are children encouraged to think about a wide variety of career interests?
- Are all students encouraged to take algebra by the end of eighth grade?

* Adapted from Education Excellence Partnership's brochure for parents, *Strengthening your child's future* (1997). To get a copy, call 1-800-382-3762.

## Activity Sheet A: Taking Stock of Standards (cont'd)

**Directions:** Use the sets of questions developed by the Education Excellence Partnership as an opening discussion to help the compact team make a quick assessment of your school. Refer back to the previous page for more questions to consider within each category listed below.

| **Categories of questions from the Education Excellence Partnership's brochure, *Strengthening your child's academic future.*** | **Do families have the information necessary to answer the question?** | **Do teachers and school staff have the information necessary to answer the question?** | **What commitments need to be included in the compact to ensure that families, teachers, and school staff can answer the question?** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. What skills and knowledge will the students be expected to master this year? | | | |
| 2. How will students be evaluated? | | | |
| 3. What can families do to stay more involved in their children's academic progress? | | | |
| 4. How does the school accommodate differences in learning? | | | |
| 5. How are students prepared for further learning after high school? | | | |

# 2 Write the Compact

## Activity Sheet B: Make Your Commitment

**Directions:** The school, families, students, and the community all have different shared responsibilities in the compact. Make copies of this worksheet, so the compact team can record the commitments of each group separately. Based on these worksheets, you can compile the responsibilities into one document. For more information on what commitments can be made, refer to the following matrix from pages 14-15 in the handbook. For more information on how to write the compact, see page 11 in the handbook.

**The ❑ school ❑ family ❑ student ❑ community agrees to the following shared responsibilities in the compact:**

**Shared responsibilities for student learning and high achievement**

❑ _____

❑ _____

❑ _____

**Shared responsibility for communication**

❑ _____

❑ _____

❑ _____

**Shared responsibility for building capacity through volunteering and training**

❑ _____

❑ _____

❑ _____

## Activity Sheet B: Make Your Commitment (cont'd)

### Shared responsibility for student learning and high achievement

| As a school, we will | As a family, we will | As a student, I will |
|---|---|---|
| **Set high standards and high expectations** | | |
| ❑ Expect students not only to learn the basics but also to take more rigorous courses in order to reach their individual potential while preparing for college or for careers. | ❑ Work with the school and our child to plan a rigorous academic program.<br>❑ Discuss with our child the importance of working hard to get the most out of school. | ❑ Discover my own unique abilities by taking challenging courses.<br>❑ Recognize and do the hard work it takes to be successful in school. |
| ❑ _____ | ❑ _____ | ❑ _____ |
| **Provide and support sound instruction** | | |
| ❑ Assign meaningful homework with clear directions and return it promptly with comments.<br>❑ Offer special assistance and appropriate time to students who progress at different rates. | ❑ Monitor our child's progress and supervise completion of homework.<br>❑ Read at home together or encourage our child to read at least 30 minutes a day. | ❑ Attend school regularly, ready to learn with homework completed.<br>❑ Use my free time wisely by reading for pleasure and by joining in cultural, recreational, and learning activities. |
| ❑ _____ | ❑ _____ | ❑ _____ |
| **Make schools safe and drug free** | | |
| ❑ Set firm and fair safety, discipline, and drug enforcement policies. | ❑ Talk with our child about the dangers of alcohol, drugs, and weapons. | ❑ Serve as a role model to my peers by honoring the school discipline codes. |
| ❑ _____ | ❑ _____ | ❑ _____ |
| **Apply modern technology** | | |
| ❑ Make the use of computers and Internet a routine part of instruction, reinforcing lessons and skills while enabling students to become technologically literate. | ❑ Find ways to give our children access to technology in school and after school to gain the necessary skills to succeed in school and in the workplace. | ❑ Learn to use computers and the Internet to help me do well in school.<br>❑ Share my knowledge of computers and the Internet with my peers and my family. |
| ❑ _____ | ❑ _____ | ❑ _____ |

## Shared responsibility for communication

| As a school, we will | As a family, we will | As a student, I will |
|---|---|---|
| ❑ Communicate with families frequently at convenient times and locations. | ❑ Attend back-to-school events and parent-teacher conferences. | ❑ Talk to my family about what I am learning and doing in school, my interests, and my plans for the future. |
| ❑ Inform students, families, and the community about the high academic standards at our school and how they can help students learn to these standards. | ❑ Ask questions about standards and other areas of concern at the school, so that we can help support the school's mission. | ❑ Seek assistance from my teacher when I have problems with my schoolwork. |
| ❑ Make the school a friendly place for parents to meet and talk. | ❑ Be champions of the school, expressing our public support and working for school modernization, the use of technology, and the ongoing professional development of teachers. | |
| ❑ Give families timely reports on student progress and on the school's overall performance. | ❑ Secure the school's help in preparing our child for college academically and financially. | |
| ❑ Widely disseminate information on financial aid opportunities to help students pay for college. | | |
| ❑ _____ | ❑ _____ | ❑ _____ |

## Shared responsibility for building capacity through volunteering and training

| As a school, we will | As a family, we will | As a student, I will |
|---|---|---|
| ❑ Support Title I requirements to get families involved in school decisions. | ❑ Volunteer for at least one event each semester, whether it be student monitoring, tutoring, or support for special activities, such as arts programs, science fairs, sporting events, or field trips. | ❑ Volunteer to share my talents by tutoring or mentoring other students (for example, serving as a reading partner for a younger student). |
| ❑ Create opportunities for all families to volunteer in the classroom, after school, and in other capacities, and encourage them to do so. | ❑ Help make the school a safe haven with computer and homework centers that operate after school. | ❑ Get involved in service projects that benefit my school and my community. |
| ❑ Provide guidance to parents on helping their children with homework and on learning at home. | ❑ Participate in school decisions by attending meetings and by serving on advisory councils. | |
| ❑ Give staff and teachers the training to work effectively in partnership with families. | | |
| ❑ _____ | ❑ _____ | ❑ _____ |

# 3 Use Your School's Compact

## Activity Sheet C: Check Your Pulse

**Directions:** Ask a variety of compact partners to answer these questions to see how well the compact is working. For more information, see page 17 in the handbook.

✔ Are your staff, family, and students aware that the compact exists?

✔ Do they know their commitments under the compact and are they fulfilling them?

✔ Is the compact used frequently in parent-teacher meetings and in other ways?

✔ How do parents, teachers, community members, and students most often use the compact?

✔ Are resources, including those from Title I, designated to help achieve the aims of your compact? How much? Are there any other possible resources available?

✔ Does your school community feel that the compact is a reasonably balanced statement of mutual responsibilities for student learning and school performance?

✔ Are there any new initiatives in the school, community, or district that could link with your compact to strengthen its impact?

# 4 Evaluating the results of the compact

## Activity Sheet D: Student Performance

**Directions:** Record student performance data in the first column, and use the second column to interpret the data by comparing them to national, state, and local averages and to other schools' results. Make notes on areas of strength and weakness in the third column. For more information, see page 21 in the handbook.

| State and local measures | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Current performance** | **Benchmark against**<br>• national averages<br>• state averages<br>• other district schools | **What are the school's strengths and weaknesses?** |
| English / Language arts | | | |
| Math | | | |
| Science | | | |
| Other (e.g. art and music, civics, foreign language, geography, history, occupational skills) | | | |

| National measures | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reading well and independently by the end of third grade | | **60 percent** of fourth-grade students nationally read at or above the basic level (NAEP, 1994). | |
| On track to take algebra in the eighth grade | | **20 percent** of eighth-grade students nationally reported taking algebra (NAEP, 1992). | |
| Taking courses that will prepare students for college entrance and for the workplace (for example, Advanced Placement, Tech-Prep, and School-to-Career opportunities) | | With increased participation in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, the number of AP exams with a score at 3 or above has **tripled** since 1982 (College Board, 1996). | |

# 4 Evaluating the results of the compact

## Activity Sheet E: Key Indicators

**Directions:** Based on your school's priorities and the data you have collected, fill in the appropriate blanks. Add your own indicators to a separate table. For more information, see page 21 in the handbook.

| Shared responsibility for student learning and high achievement | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Schools** | **Families** | **Students** |
| **Setting high standards and high expectations** | | |
| **Standards:**<br>_____ % of families report that they are informed about what the school's standards are and what is required of students. | _____ % of families and _____ % of teachers report that families have high expectations of their children and expect them to do their best. | _____ % of teachers report that students are highly motivated, that they ask questions to clarify what is expected of them, and that they seek help when there is something they do not understand. |
| **Attendance:**<br>Daily attendance rate for teachers: _____ | _____ % of families and _____ % of teachers and school staff report that families monitor their children's attendance. | Daily attendance rate for students: _____<br>_____ % of students were absent ten or more days in the past year. |
| **Providing and supporting sound instruction** | | |
| **Instruction:**<br>_____ % of families and _____ % of students indicate that the instructional program is challenging, and that it is tailored to students who progress at different rates.<br>_____ % of teachers have credentials to teach in their subject. | | |
| **Homework:**<br>_____ % of families and _____ % of students report that meaningful homework is assigned and returned promptly with comments. | _____ % of families and _____ % of teachers report that families supervise completion of homework and sign off on completed assignments. | _____ % of teachers report that students come to school with homework complete. |

## Shared responsibility for student learning and high achievement (cont'd)

| Schools | Families | Students |
|---|---|---|
| **Providing and supporting sound instruction (cont'd)** | | |
| **Reading:**<br>_____ % of families report that the school provides them with challenging materials that support reading outside school (for example, reading lists and suggested activities). | _____ % of families report that family members read with their child or encourage their child to read daily. | _____ % of students report that they read at least 20 minutes a day. |
| **Math:**<br>_____ % of families report that the school makes clear the sequence of courses necessary for all students in order to take the advanced math courses in high school. | _____ % of families indicate that they understand the importance of their children taking algebra and geometry. | By middle school, _____ % of students indicate that they recognize the importance of taking algebra and geometry. |
| **Making schools safe and drug free** | | |
| _____ % of families and _____ % of students believe that the school discipline policy is clear and uniformly enforced.<br><br>Number of disciplinary incidents per year: ____<br><br>Suspension rate: _____<br><br>_____ % of students indicate they feel safe at school. | _____ % of families and _____ % of students report that families talk with their children about the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and weapons. | _____ % of students report using drugs or alcohol in the last month.<br><br>Number of fights on campus in the last year: _____ |
| **Applying modern technology** | | |
| _____ % of teachers report that they have an adequate number of computers and appropriate software to use in instruction.<br><br>_____ % of teachers indicate that they use computers and the Internet in classroom instruction. | _____ % of students report that their families and the school help them find ways to learn about technology outside school (whether at home, at a public library, or through a community program). | _____ % of students report regularly using computers for learning. |

## Shared responsibility for communication

| Schools | Families | Students |
|---|---|---|
| **Communication on student progress** | | |
| _____ % of families report that the school holds parent-teacher conferences at convenient times and locations.<br><br>School translates information and materials for families into other languages.<br><br>___ Yes ___ No | _____ % of families attend parent-teacher conferences. | _____ % of students report talking with their families about what they are doing at school. |
| **School climate** | | |
| _____ % of families and _____ % of students indicate that they feel welcome at the school and that the school respects their opinions. | _____ % of school staff and teachers indicate that families are responsive to their concerns. | _____ % of teachers report that students are respectful of one another and of teachers |

## Shared responsibility for building capacity

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Training** | | |
| _____ % of teachers and school staff have participated in training in family involvement. | _____ % of families participate in workshops on achieving higher standards to learn how they can help their children. | |
| **Volunteering** | | |
| ___ % of families report that school provides high-quality, well-organized opportunities to volunteer at the school. | _____ % of families volunteer at the school.<br><br>_____ % of volunteers report that they actively recruit new families to help out at the school. | _____ % of students volunteer at the school or in the community |

# 5 Strengthen Your Compact

## Activity Sheet F: Take Action

**Directions:** Based on Activity Sheets D and E, make a list of your strengths and weaknesses. Use the following worksheet to design an improvement plan. For more information on how to strengthen the compact, see page 31 in the handbook.

**Area identified for improvement:** _____

**Why improvement is needed** (based on progress towards standards and local, state, and national comparisons):

_____

_____

**Improvement strategies.** How will you strengthen your actions in this area? What specific actions will you take with reference to learning, to communication, and to volunteering and training? How will each partner contribute to the effort?

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

3. _____

_____

_____

Do you need to make any specific changes to the compact document itself?

_____

_____

_____

_____

PARTNERSHIP
for Family
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in Education

# The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

**"Better Education Is Everybody's Business."**
*U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley*

***What is the Partnership's mission?*** To promote children's learning through the development of family-school-community partnerships.

***Who are the Partners for Learning?*** Thousands of family, school, community, employer and religious groups comprise the Partnership. They have come together to support student learning to high standards. These Partners represent a growing grassroots movement across this country organized into four areas:

- "Family-School Partners for Learning" support school-home partnerships where communication and mutual responsibility for children's learning to high standards are key.
- "Employers for Learning" adopt family- and student-friendly business practices, such as providing leave time to attend parent conferences and volunteer in school, providing parent training and child care, and working with neighborhood schools.
- "Community/Cultural Organizations for Learning" support learning communities through organized before- and after-school and summer activities. They volunteer in the schools, help to make streets safe for children, and support supervised recreational activities.
- "Religious Organizations for Learning" provide parent education programs and reading tutoring programs for children, sponsor cultural programs, make their buildings available for organized activities, and support out-of-school learning.

***What are the benefits of joining the Partnership?*** Partners improve their effectiveness by connecting with other groups and drawing on each others' strengths. The benefits of being part of a coordinated effort are key: Partners learn about and share the latest and best practices from other Partner organizations. Recognition is earned for organizations' visible commitments at the national, state, and local levels. Members of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education receive support through conferences, publications and on-going communication, including newsletters and an Internet home page at **www.ed.gov/PFIE**.

***What are activities that the Partnership supports?*** As the Partnership grows, special projects support family involvement and student learning across communities:

- **READ*WRITE*NOW!**, an intensive summer component to the **America Reads Challenge**, encourages children's reading and writing with a reading partner 30 minutes a day.
- **America Goes Back to School: Answering the President's Call to Action** encourages every American to go back to school each fall to share their talents and experiences. Taking the challenge means addressing local educational concerns on a continuous basis and making a year-long commitment to learning.
- **Getting Ready for College Early**, an initiative to encourage all students to take courses they need to enter college and to inform parents of the sequence of courses their child needs to take, as well as the financial planning involved. To be launched in winter 1998.

***How can your organization join the Partnership?*** If your organization wants to become a **Partner for Learning** fill out one of the following sign-on sheets and send it in. You will receive your Partnership member's kit soon after.

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# Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education...

## Family-School Partnership Promise

Families and schools across America are increasingly accepting mutual responsibility for children's learning. When families are involved in children's learning, at school and at home, schools work better and students learn more. Schools and families are working with employers and community organizations to develop local partnerships that support a safe school environment where students learn to challenging standards. By working together, exchanging information, sharing decision-making, and collaborating in children's learning, everyone can contribute to the education process.

***Coming together as families, local school board governance, administration, teachers and school staff, we form this partnership and affirm the importance of family involvement in children's learning. We pledge to:***

- Share responsibility at school and at home to give students a better education and a good start in life.
- Our school will be welcoming to families; reach out to families before problems arise; offer challenging courses; create safe and drug-free learning environments; organize tutoring and other opportunities to improve student learning; and support families to be included in the school decision-making process.
- Our families will monitor student attendance, homework completion and television watching; take the time to talk with and listen to their children; become acquainted with teachers, administrators and school staff; read with younger children and share a good book with a teen; volunteer in school when possible; and participate in the school decision-making process.
- Promote effective two-way communication between families and schools, by schools reducing educational jargon and breaking down cultural and language barriers and by families staying in touch with the school.
- Provide opportunities for families to learn how to help their children succeed in school and for school staff to work with families.
- Support family-school efforts to improve student learning by reviewing progress regularly and strengthening cooperative actions.

*We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning. (Please type or print the following.)*

**School Name:** _____

**School Address:** _____

**City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

**School Phone:** _____ **Fax:** _____ **E-mail:** _____

**Principal:** _____ **Signature:** _____

**Parent Organization Representative:** _____ **Signature:** _____

**Teacher Representative:** _____ **Signature:** _____

**School Staff Representative:** _____ **Signature:** _____

**Contact Person:** _____ **Title:** _____ **Contact Phone:** _____

Send to: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173 or fax to 202-205-9133 to receive your **Family-School Partnership Promise Certificate.**

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# Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education...

## The Community Promise

A strong and vigorous community, one that is supportive of all citizens, depends upon an educated, skilled, competent and involved citizenry. Schools, families, and community organizations are increasingly accepting mutual responsibility for children's learning. By working together, exchanging information, sharing decision-making, and collaborating in children's learning, everyone can contribute to the educational process. As a community-based organization, we support family-school compacts and affirm the importance of family-community involvement in students' learning.

***We commit to involve our organization and its community members in a family-school-community partnership. By coming together with other organizations, we will:***

- Make safe schools/safe neighborhoods a priority.
- Combat alcohol, drugs, and violence in and around schools and neighborhoods.
- Reinforce parenting skills using community institutions to provide family and literacy training and referral services.
- Provide mentoring and homework help programs so that children may be assured of tutoring and guidance from knowledgeable and responsible adults.
- Come together to coordinate delivery of services and to eliminate duplication of efforts.
- Help develop and sponsor affordable and quality after-school, weekend and summer learning, cultural, and community recreational activities.
- Support school improvement efforts in the local community.
- Support and become informed about school governance issues.
- Encourage schools to be involved in the life of the community, through co-sponsorship of community outreach activities of partner organizations.

*We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit our community organization to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning. (Please type or print the following information.)*

**Official:** _____ **Signature:** _____

**Community Group:** _____ **Date:** _____

**Contact Person:** _____ **Title:** _____

**Address:** _____

**City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

**Phone:** _____ **Fax:** _____ **E-Mail:** _____

Send to: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173 or fax to 202-205-9133 to receive your **Community Promise Certificate**.

# Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education...

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## Employers for Learning Promise

A strong and vigorous economy, for our employers and our nation, depends upon an educated, skilled, and competent citizenry. Today's students are tomorrow's citizens, and are our long-term investments for the future.

Employers play an important role in the school-improvement efforts on local, state, and national levels. We can now multiply the effectiveness of such efforts by enlisting our current employees as partners in the campaign to support and better the American educational system. Any company, regardless of its size, can take steps to support parents in its workforce and to support local education.

Over 30 years of research shows that greater family and adult involvement in children's learning is a critical link to achieving a high-quality education.

***Small investments that enable employee participation in students' academic success, and in our education system, lead to a win/win for everyone:***

- ***Employers Win*** by helping prepare a highly skilled and globally competitive workforce.
- ***Employees Win*** by making positive differences in children's education and in their local schools.
- ***Schools Win*** from increased parental and community involvement.
- ***Students Win*** from better education.

*We recognize there are many ways to get started:*
- Contact a local school to discuss opportunities for cooperation.
- Explore with employees ways in which they can help children learn.
- Explore with employees ways in which they can help local schools better educate their students.
- Explore policies and practices to encourage and enable employee involvement in schools and learning.
- Contact the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education for information.

*We commit to:*
- Identify a contact person, authorized to explore and develop options for company involvement in our family-school-community initiatives.
- Take action to implement programs.
- Share best practices after evaluating programs annually.
- Form partnerships with other stakeholders to promote, implement, and improve family-friendly policies and practices.

*We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit our organization to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning. (Please type or print the following information.)*

**President/CEO:** _____ **Signature:** _____

**Company/Organization:** _____ **Date:** _____

**Contact Person:** _____ **Title:** _____

**Address:** _____

**City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

**Phone:** _____ **Fax:** _____ **E-Mail:** _____

Send to: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173 or fax to 202-205-9133 to receive your **Employers for Learning Promise Certificate.**

# Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education...

PARTNERSHIP for Family Involvement in Education

## Statement of Common Purpose Among Religious Communities Supporting Family Involvement in Learning

*"Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray"*
*Proverbs 22:6*

As members of religious communities from across the land, we join to affirm the vital and enduring role of families in the education of children. We have always regarded families--and parents in particular--as the primary teachers of children. Encouraged by Secretary of Education Richard Riley's concern for all children and his commitment to the role of families in educating children, we call upon all people of good will to stand as one with us in support of families' participation in children's learning.

Parents and guardians need to immerse themselves in the education of their children as never before. Children need the immediate and constant support of their families. But there are other voices at odds with these goals: the voices of poverty, loneliness, and fear. Because of this, there are children who do not attend school regularly, whose test scores and grades falter, who have too much idle time, and whose parents are absent, too overwhelmed or too busy to spend time reading, talking, praying, playing, listening, helping or encouraging them.

Religious communities hear this cry. It is with this knowledge and in our unique roles that we stand united in our commitment to the involvement of family members in the education of children. We believe the participation of family members in the education and spiritual development of young people is fundamental to a child's preparation for adulthood and the responsibilities of citizenship. Our nation's future depends upon a shared concern for the education of young people.

It is imperative that religious communities join together with governments, community organizations, businesses, and public and private schools in striving to provide families, parents, grandparents, foster parents, guardians, or extended family members with the information, skills, tools, and opportunities that will encourage their participation in the total education of their children, including character education. We are committed to working together to improve children's learning through family involvement partnerships.

We are thankful for the blessings of religious liberty, a sacred trust, stated in the Declaration of Independence and guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution, that enables the members of all faiths to work together freely and openly for the common good. As beneficiaries of this great legacy, we pledge our support in encouraging family involvement in the education of children.

We call upon all citizens, religious communities, community organizations, and businesses to do their share. We urge family members to become actively involved in their children's education, religious communities to work to better understand and meet educational and family needs, community organizations to sponsor meaningful youth- and family-oriented activities, and businesses to adopt family-friendly policies in the workplace. Governments need to promote public policies that encourage greater family involvement in the education of all children. We challenge our society to value and nurture our children of today so that they can be productive citizens of tomorrow.

*We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit our religious organization to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning. (Please type or print the following information.)*

**Official:** _____ **Signature:** _____

**House of Worship/Religious Organization:** _____ **Date:** _____

**National Affiliation/Denomination:** _____

**Contact Person:** _____ **Title:** _____

**Address:** _____

**City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

**Phone:** _____ **Fax:** _____ **E-Mail:** _____

Send to: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173 or fax to 202-205-9133 to receive your **Statement of Common Purpose Among Religious Communities Certificate.**

# Survey and Comment Form

We value your opinions! Please let us know what you think about this action handbook.

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **This handbook:** | | | | |
| Is clear and understandable | | | | |
| Provides valuable information | | | | |
| Provides the right amount of information | | | | |
| Is presented in an accessible format | | | | |
| Will be valuable to my compact team | | | | |
| Can help create and strengthen partnerships | | | | |
| Can help improve student learning | | | | |
| **I wish there was more information provided on:** | | | | |
| What a compact is and what it can look like | | | | |
| Getting started | | | | |
| Writing the compact | | | | |
| Using your school's compact | | | | |
| Evaluating the results of the compact | | | | |
| Strengthening your compact | | | | |
| The activity sheets | | | | |
| Examples of what schools are doing | | | | |
| Key resources | | | | |
| The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education | | | | |

**Please feel free to add your own comments and return them to the following address:**

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-8173
Fax: 202-205-9133